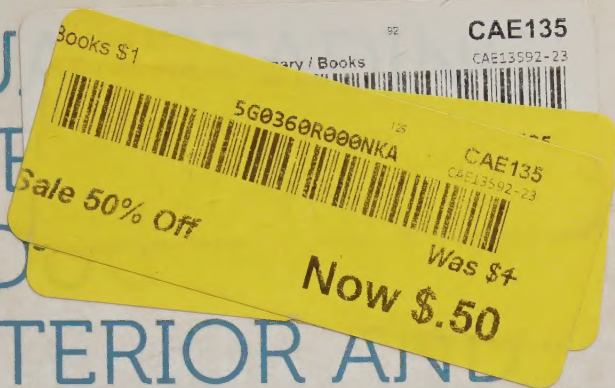



SPIRITUALITY FOR EVERYONE INTRODUCING THE INTERIOR AND PERFECT LIFE

LE MASSON, INNOCENT, 1627-1703

Volume 2





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation



ISBN: 9781314426625

Published by:
HardPress Publishing
8345 NW 66TH ST #2561
MIAMI FL 33166-2626

Email: info@hardpress.net
Web: <http://www.hardpress.net>

ST. BASIL'S SCHOOL

TRANSFERRED

No. _____



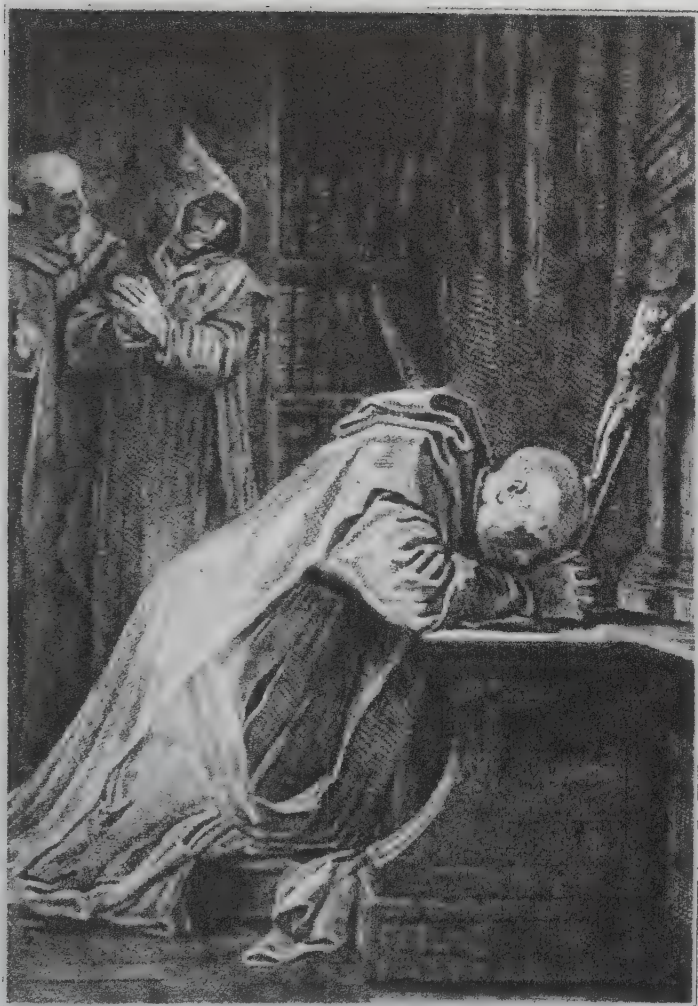


EX LIBRIS
ST. BASIL'S SCHOLASTICATE
TRANSFERRED

No. _____



SPIRITUAL READING FOR EVERY DAY.



ST BRUNO, CONFESSOR,
Founder of the Carthusian Monks

SPIRITUAL READING

FOR EVERY DAY:

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERIOR AND
PERFECT LIFE,

FOR THE USE ALIKE OF PERSONS IN THE WORLD AND
IN RELIGION,

Arranged in Fifty-three Lessons,

MADE UP FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE, THE DEVOUT LIFE, AND
THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

BY THE

REV. DOM. INNOCENT LE MASSON,

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF CARTHUSIANS,
1677.

TRANSLATED, AND SLIGHTLY ABRIDGED,

BY

KENELM DIGBY BEST,

PRIEST OF THE ORATORY OF ST. PHILIP NERI.

Seventh Edition,
IN TWO PARTS,
PART II.

EX LIB

No.

A 119.1

LONDON: { BURNS & OATES, 28 ORCHARD STREET.
LASLETT & Co, 254 BROMPTON ROAD.
R. & T. WASHBOURNE, 4 PATERNOSTER ROW.
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS.

1902.

MAD 12 '53

6329.

Imprimatur :

HENRICUS EDUARDUS,

Card. Archiep. Westmon.

CONTENTS.

LESSON XXXI.

Page

Of the Choice that there ought to be in the Exercise of Virtues...	2
--	---

LESSON XXXII.

Of Patience	13
Of Acquiring Patience, and of Fighting against Concupiscence...	18
That Temporal Miseries are to be Borne with Patience, after the Example of Jesus Christ	20

LESSON XXXIII.

Of External Humility	23
Of Internal Humility	26
That we ought to Walk in Truth and Humility in God's Presence	32
Of Humble Submission	33

LESSON XXXIV.

That Humility makes us love our own Abjection	36
How to keep our Good Name in the Practice of Humility...	40
Of Supporting Injuries, and who is Proved to be Truly Patient ...	44
Against the Tongues of Detractors	46

LESSON XXXV.

Of Meekness toward our Neighbours, and Remedies against Anger	48
Of Meekness toward Ourselves... ..	52
Of Bearing the Defects of Others	55
Of a Good, Peaceable Man	56
That a Man should not be too much Dejected when he Falls into some Defects	57

LESSON XXXVI.

We must Treat of Business with Care, but without Vexation and Solicitude	61
Of the Good Government of Ourselves in Outward Things, and of having Recourse to God in Dangers	63
Of Prudence in our Doings	64
That a Man must not be Over Eager in his Affairs	65

LESSON XXXVII.

Of Obedience	67
Of the Obedience of a Humble Subject, after the Example of Jesus Christ... ..	70
Of the Necessity of Chastity	71
Advices how to Preserve Chastity	73
Of Poverty of Spirit to be Observed in Riches	75
How to Practise True and Real Poverty, being, notwithstanding, really rich	78
How to Practise Richness of Spirit in Real Poverty... ..	82

LESSON XXXVIII.

Of Friendship	86
Of True Friendship	88
Of the Difference betwixt True and Vain Friendship	91
Advices on the Subject of Friendship	93
Of Shunning too much Familiarity	96
That our Peace is not to be Placed in Men	96

LESSON XXXIX.

Of Exterior Mortification	99
Of Company and Solitude	105
Of Modest and Decent Attire	108
Of Discourse : and First, How to Speak of God	110
Of Civility in Talk and Due Respect of Persons	111
Of Avoiding Superfluity of Words	114

LESSON XL.

Of Rash Judgment	117
Of Detraction	122
Of Avoiding Rash Judgment	128
Of Self-Consideration	129
That we are not to be Curious in Inquiring into the Life of Others	130

LESSON XLI.

Other Advices touching Discourse	133
Of not Drawing to Ourselves Exterior Things	135
That we may not Believe all, and how Easily we Err in Speech ...	136
Of Having Confidence in God when Arrows of Words are aimed against us	138

LESSON XLII.

That we must be Faithful both in Great and Small Occasions ...	142
That we must Keep our Minds Just and Reasonable	145
Of Desires	147
That Grace is to be Hid under the Guardianship of Humility ...	150

LESSON XLIII.

That we must not Regard the Discourse of the Children of the World	154
That we must always have a Good Courage... ..	157
Against the Vain Judgments of Men	158
In what things the Firm Peace of the Heart and 'True Progress Consist	159

LESSON XLIV.

Of the Nature of Temptations, and the Difference between Feeling them and Consenting to them	163
Of the Advantage of Adversity	167
Of Resisting Temptation	168

LESSON XLV.

An Encouragement to a Soul in Temptation... ..	173
How Temptation and Delectation may be Sin	175
Of the Small Number of the Lovers of the Cross of Jesus	177
That there is no being Secure from Temptation in this Life ...	179
Of the Consideration of the Misery of Man	180

LESSON XLVI.

Remedies against Great Temptations	185
That we must also Resist Small Temptations	186
Remedies against these Small Temptations	188
How, in the Time of Tribulation, God is to be Invoked	189

LESSON XLVII.

How to Strengthen our Hearts against Temptations	192
Of the King's Highway of the Holy Cross	193
Of the Proof of a True Lover	199

Contents.

viii

Page

LESSON XLVIII.

Of Unquietness	203
Of Sadness	206
Of Asking the Divine Assistance, and of Confidence of Recovering Grace	208

LESSON XLIX.

Of Spiritual and Sensible Consolations, and how we must Behave Ourselves in them	213
Of Gratitude for the Grace of God	221
That Man hath no Good of himself, and that he cannot Glory in Anything	223

LESSON L.

Of Spiritual Dryness and Barrenness	227
An Example of the Above	233
Of the Want of all Consolation... ..	237

LESSON LI.

That we ought Every Year to Renew our Good Purposes by the following Exercises... ..	242
Considerations on the Favour which God does us by calling us to His Service, according to the Protestation made at first ...	243
Examination of our Soul's Advance in Devotion	246
Examination of the State of our Soul towards God	247

LESSON LII.

Examination of our State towards Ourselves... ..	250
Examination of our State towards our Neighbour	251
Examination of our Soul's Affections	252
Conclusion of this Examination... ..	253

LESSON LIII.

Considerations proper to Renew our Good Purposes	255
Of the Excellence of our Soul	255
Of the Excellence of Virtues	257
Of the Examples of the Saints... ..	257
Of the Love that Jesus Christ bears us	259
Of the Eternal Love of God towards us	260
Conclusion of these Considerations	261

CONCLUSION OF THIS WORK	246
--------------------------------	-----

Spiritual Reading for every Day.



LESSON XXXI.

Of the Choice that there ought to be in the Exercise of Virtues.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection: and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful.—Col. iii. 12.

But we entreat you, brethren, that you abound more: and that you use your endeavour to be quiet, and that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you: and that you walk honestly towards them that are without; and that you want nothing of any man's.—1 Thess. iv. 11.

Extinguish not the Spirit. Despise not prophecies. But prove all things: hold fast that which is good. From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves. And

2 LESSON XXXI. OF THE CHOICE OF VIRTUES.

may the God of peace himself sanctify you in all things : that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved, blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is faithful, who hath called you, who also will do it.
—1 Thess. v. 19.

But flee thou youthful desires, and pursue justice, faith, charity, and peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. And avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing they that beget strifes. But the servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient, with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth.—2 Tim. ii. 22.

And let our men also learn to excel in good works for necessary uses : that they be not unfruitful.—Titus iii. 14.

These words of Holy Writ contain the sum of Christian virtues. The mode of practising them is given by your sainted teacher, keeping, as is his wont, in all things discretion and prudence, and due regard for each one's state of life.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. I.—OF THE CHOICE WE OUGHT TO MAKE IN THE EXERCISE OF VIRTUES.

1. The queen of the bees never goes into the fields unless environed with all her little people, and charity never enters into the heart, but she lodges with her the whole train of other virtues, exercising and setting them at work as a captain does his soldiers. But she employs them not all at once, nor all alike, nor in all seasons, nor in every place. For the just man is like a tree planted by the water side, which brings forth fruit in due season : because charity, watering the soul, brings forth in her the works of virtue, every one in their proper time.

2. *Music, however pleasant in itself, is troublesome in time of mourning* (Eccles. xxii. 6), says the Proverb. It is a great fault in many who, undertaking the exercise of some particular virtue, resolve to produce acts of it in all sorts of occurrences, and, like the ancient philosophers, either always weep or always laugh; and, what is yet worse, blame and censure such as do not always exercise the same virtues. We should rejoice with the joyful, and weep with the sorrowful, says the Apostle, and charity is patient, bountiful, liberal, discreet, and complying.

3. There are, notwithstanding, some virtues which should be almost universal in practice, and ought not only to make their own special acts, but also to communicate their qualities to the acts of all other virtues. Occasions are seldom presented to exercise fortitude, magnanimity, and magnificence; but meekness, temperance, modesty and humility are virtues with which all the actions of our life ought to be tempered. There are virtues more excellent than these, but the use of these is more necessary. Sugar is more excellent than salt, but salt is more often and generally used. We must always therefore have good and ready provision of these general virtues, since the use of them must be so ordinary.

4. Among the exercise of virtues, we ought to prefer that which is conformable to our calling, not that which is most agreeable to our fancy. *St. Paula* delighted to practise severe corporal mortifications, that so she might more easily enjoy tranquillity of spirit; but she had more obligation to obey her superiors; and therefore *St. Jerome* says she was to be reprehended, in that she used immoderate abstinence against her bishop's advice. The Apostles, on

4 LESSON XXXI. OF THE CHOICE OF VIRTUES.

the other side, appointed to preach the Gospel and distribute the bread of heaven to souls, judged exceeding well that they should do wrong to this great function, if they should employ their time in caring for the poor, although to do so were an excellent virtue. Every vocation has need to practise some special virtue: there are the virtues of a prelate, and those of a prince, and those of a soldier, the virtues of a married woman, and the virtues of a widow. And although all ought to be endowed with all virtues, yet all ought not to practise them alike, but each one to give himself in more particular manner to those virtues which are requisite to that kind of life whereto he is called.

5. Among the virtues which concern not our particular duty, we must prefer the most excellent, and not the most apparent. Comets ordinarily seem greater than the stars, and to our eyes occupy much more space; whereas, indeed, they are neither in greatness nor quality comparable to the stars, neither seem they great for any other reason but because they are nearer, and are of a grosser substance than the stars. So there are virtues which because they are nearer, sensible, and if I may so say, more material, are highly esteemed, and always preferred by the vulgar: so, commonly they prefer corporal alms before spiritual; the hair shirt, fasting, nakedness, disciplines, and other such bodily mortifications, before meekness, courtesy, modesty, and other mortifications of the mind, which notwithstanding, are much more excellent. Choose, then, *Philothea*, the best virtues, not the most esteemed; the most excellent, not the most apparent; the chiefest, not the bravest.

6. It is profitable that every one should choose a particular exercise of virtue, not to abandon the rest, but to keep his mind in a more settled order and employment. A fair young woman, shining like the sun, royally adorned and crowned with a garland of olives, appeared to *St. John*, bishop of *Alexandria*, and said unto him : I am the King's eldest daughter. If thou canst accept of me for thy friend, I will conduct thee to his presence. He perceived that this was mercy towards the poor, which God commended to him, and therefore, ever after he gave himself in such sort to the exercise of works of mercy, as that he is generally called *St. John the Almoner*. *Eulogius* of *Alexandria*, desiring to do some particular service to God, and being not able to embrace a solitary life, or to resign himself to the obedience of another, took to him in his house a miserable person infected with leprosy, that he might exercise his charity and mortification on him ; and to perform this with more perfection, made a vow to entertain him, honour, and serve him, as a servant does his lord and master ; now upon some temptation happening as well to the leper as to *Eulogius*, to depart one from the other, they went to great *St. Anthony*, who said to them : Beware, my children, that you separate not yourselves one from the other ; for you, being both near your end, if the angel find you not together, you are in great danger of losing your crowns.

7. The King *St. Louis* visited hospitals, and served the sick with his own hands, as if he had served for wages. *St. Francis* above all things loved poverty, which he termed his mistress. *St. Dominic* made choice of preaching, whereof his order takes the name. *St. Gregory the Great* took pleasure in entertaining

pilgrims, following the example of the great *Abraham*, and like him, received the King of Glory in form of a pilgrim. *Tobias* exercised his charity in burying the dead. *St. Elizabeth*, great princess as she was, delighted in nothing so much as in abasing herself. *St. Catherine of Genoa*, in her widowhood, dedicated herself to serve an hospital. *Cassianus* recounts that a devout gentlewoman, desirous to exercise the virtue of patience, came to *St. Athanasius*, who, at her request, placed a poor widow with her, so wayward, choleric, troublesome, and intolerable with her insolence and peevishness, that she gave the devout lady sufficient occasion to practise the virtues of meekness and patience.

8. So among the servants of God, some apply themselves to serve the sick, others to relieve the poor, others to instruct little children in the knowledge of Christian doctrine, others to recall souls that are lost and gone astray, others to adorn churches and deck altars, others to make peace and agreement among men. Wherein they imitate embroiderers, who upon divers grounds with admirable variety intermingle silk, silver, and gold, whereof they make all sorts of flowers; for so these godly souls who undertake some particular exercise of devotion, make it serve them as a groundwork for their spiritual embroidery, on which they work the variety of all other virtues, holding by that means all their actions and affections better united and ordered, by the careful application of them to their principal exercise, and so they set forth their spirit—

“In robes of cloth of gold most skilfully
Embroidered, with art’s best variety.”

9. When we are assaulted by any vice, it behoves us as much as possible to practise the contrary virtue,

and to apply all other virtues to the perfecting thereof; for so we shall overcome the enemy, and advance ourselves in all other virtues. If I feel myself assaulted by pride or choler, in all my actions I will bend myself towards humility and meekness, and to that end I will apply all my other exercises of prayer, of the sacraments, of prudence, of constancy, and sobriety. For as the wild boars, to sharpen their tusks, whet and grind them with their other teeth, so that all of them reciprocally become sharp, thus, a virtuous man, having undertaken to perfect himself in that virtue of which he has most need for his defence, ought to file and whet it by the exercise of others, and in refining that one they all become more polished and excellent. So it happened to *Job*, who exercising himself particularly in patience, against so many temptations wherewith he was violently assaulted, became perfectly holy in all kinds of virtues. Yea, it has to come to pass, as *St. Gregory Nazianzen* says, that by one only act of virtue well and perfectly performed a man has attained to the height of virtue; and he alleges *Rahab*, who having exactly practised the office of hospitality, arrived at supreme glory; which is to be understood when such acts are practised with excellent fervour of charity.

CH. II.—PURSUANCE OF THE FORMER DISCOURSE ABOUT THE CHOICE OF VIRTUES.

1. *St. Augustine* excellently says, that young beginners in devotion commit certain faults, which, according to the rigour of the laws of perfection, are blameable, and yet are very commendable for the presages they give of a future excellency in piety, to which they serve as a disposition. That base and

cowardly fear which begets excessive scruples in the souls of those that newly forsake the custom of sin, is a commendable virtue in beginners, and a certain sign of a future purity of conscience; but this fear would be very reprehensible in those who are far advanced, in whose heart perfect love should reign, which, by little and little, chases away this servile fear.

2. *St. Bernard*, in his beginning, was full of rigour and austerity towards those that put themselves under his conduct, to whom he declared, even at their first entrance, that they must forsake the body, and come to him only with the spirit. When he heard their confessions, he detested with an extraordinary severity all kinds of faults, were they never so small, and so pressed these poor novices to perfection, that, instead of putting them forward, he drew them backward; for they lost heart and breath to see themselves thus hastily driven up so high and steep an ascent. Observe, *Philothea*, it was the most ardent zeal of a perfect purity which provoked this great saint to this method, and this zeal was a great virtue; and yet it ceased not to be reprehensible. God Himself in a holy apparition corrected him for it, infusing into his soul a meek, sweet, amiable, and tender spirit, by means of which he, being wholly changed, accused himself very much for his former severity, and became so mild and condescending to every one that he made himself all to all, that he might gain them all.

3. *St. Jerome* having recounted that *St. Paula*, his ghostly child, was not only excessive but obstinate in the exercise of bodily mortifications, even to that height that she refused to hearken to the contrary advice which *St. Epiphanius*, her Bishop, had given

her in this respect, and, moreover, that she gave herself over in such sort to grieve for the death of her friends that she was always in danger of death, in fine, concludes in this sort : Some will say that, instead of writing the praises of this saint, I write reproofs and reproaches ; but I call *Jesus* to witness, whom she served, and whom I desire to serve, that I lie neither on the one side or on the other, but set down clearly what is to be said of her, as one Christian of another, that is to say, I write a history of her, not a panegyric, and that her vices are the virtues of others. His meaning is, that the defects of *St. Paula* would have borne the name of virtues in a soul less perfect ; as, in truth, there are actions which are esteemed imperfections in such as are perfect, but would be held great perfections in those who are imperfect.

4. It is a good sign in a sick man when, at the end of his sickness, his legs swell ; for it shows that nature now strengthened casts out her superfluous humours, but the very same sign would be ill in one that were not sick ; for it demonstrates that nature has not force enough to resolve and dissipate the humours. My *Philothea*, we must have a good opinion of those in whom we see a practice of virtues although with imperfection, since the saints themselves have often practised them in such manner. But as for ourselves, we must have a care to exercise ourselves in them not only faithfully but discreetly : and to that end we must observe carefully the advice of the Wise Man, not to rely on our own prudence, but on the judgment of such as God has given us for Directors.

5. There are certain things by many esteemed virtues, which, in truth, are none at all, of which it is needful to speak a word or two : I mean ecstasies,

raptures, insensibilities, impossibilities, deific unions, revelations, transformations, and such like perfections, of which some books treat, promising to elevate the soul even to a contemplation purely intellectual, to an essential application of the spirit, and to a super-eminent life. Look you, *Philothea*, these perfections are not virtues, but rather recompenses that God gives for virtue, or rather patterns of the happiness of the life to come, which sometimes are presented to men to make them in love with the whole piece above in Heaven.

6. But we must not for all that pretend to such favours, since they are no way necessary to the well serving and loving of God, which should be our only aim ; neither are they graces that can always be obtained by travail and industry, since they are rather passions than actions, which we may well receive, but cannot produce within us.

7. I add that we have not undertaken more than to make ourselves virtuous, devout, and pious men and women ; and therefore we must employ ourselves earnestly in that ; and if it please God to raise us to those angelical perfections, we will then be also good angels : but, in the meantime, let us exercise ourselves simply, humbly, and devoutly in little virtues, the conquest of which our Saviour hath proposed to our care and industry, as patience, meekness, mortification of our hearts, humility, obedience, poverty, chastity, compassion towards our neighbours and bearing with their imperfections, diligence and holy fervour. Let us willingly leave those heights to elevated souls ; we merit not so high a place in God's service ; we shall be too happy to serve Him in His kitchen, in His pantry, to be pages, porters, grooms of His chamber ;

it is for Him afterwards, if He please, to promote us to His cabinet and privy council. Yes, *Philothea*, for this King of glory does not recompense His servants according to the dignity of the offices they bear, but according to the measure of the love and humility with which they serve Him.

8. *Saul* seeking his father's asses found the crown of Israel. *Rebecca* by watering *Abraham's* camels became the spouse of his son. *Ruth* gleaning after the harvest-men of *Booz*, and lying at his feet, was advanced to his side and made his wife. Certainly such high pretensions to things so extraordinary are very subject to illusions, deceits, and errors; and it happens sometimes that those who think themselves angels are not even good men, and that they are greater in their words and phrases than in their thoughts and actions. Yet must we not lightly despise or rashly censure anything; but, while blessing God for the supereminence of others, keep ourselves humble in our lower but safer way, less splendid, but more suitable to our insufficiency and littleness, wherein, if we converse humbly and faithfully, God will exalt us to greatness that is really great.

LESSON XXXII.

Of Patience: Of Acquiring Patience, and of striving against Concupiscence: That Temporal Miseries are to be Borne with Equanimity after the Example of Christ.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations: knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And patience hath a perfect work: that you may be perfect and entire: failing in nothing.—James i. 2.

For this is thanksworthy, if for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if committing sin and being buffeted for it you endure? But, if doing well you suffer patiently, this is thanksworthy before God. For unto this are you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.—1 Pet. ii. 19.

And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.—2 Tim. iii. 12.

And therefore we also having so great a cloud of witnesses over our head, laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: Looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross,

despising the shame, and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself: that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.— Heb. xii. 1.

These words show us the excellence, necessity, and usefulness of patience. The practice is explained as follows.

INTRODUCTION—BK. III., CH. III.—OF PATIENCE.

1. *Patience is necessary for you that, performing the will of God, you may obtain the promise* (Heb. x. 36), says the Apostle: yea, for, as our Saviour Himself pronounced, *in your patience you shall possess your souls* (Luke xxi. 19). It is man's greatest happiness, *Philothæa*, to possess his soul, and the more perfect our patience is, the more perfectly do we possess our souls. In this virtue we must become perfect. Call to mind often that our Lord has saved us by suffering and enduring, and that we ought also to work out our salvation by sufferings and afflictions, as by enduring injuries, contradictions, and crosses, with all possible meekness.

2. Limit not your patience to such and such kind of injuries and afflictions, but extend it universally to all those that God shall send and suffer to befall you. There are some who will suffer no tribulations but such as are honourable, as, for example, to be wounded in battle, to be prisoners of war, to be persecuted for religion, to be impoverished by some quarrel in which they got the mastery—these men love not tribulation, but the honour of it. He that is

truly patient and a true servant of God, suffers indifferently tribulations accompanied with ignominy or honour: to be despised, reprehended, and accused by wicked men, is but a pleasure to a man of courage; but to be reproached and ill-treated by the good, by our friends, by our parents, there is the true trial of patience. I more esteem the meekness with which the great *St. Charles Borromeo* suffered a long time the public reprehensions that a great preacher, of an exceeding strict order, uttered against him in the pulpit, than all the assaults he received from others. For as the stinging of bees is far more smarting than that of flies, so the evil we receive from good men, and the contradictions they make, are much more insupportable than others; and yet it chances very often that two good men, having both of them good intentions, through the diversity of their opinions, raise great persecutions and contradictions one against the other.

3. Be patient, not only in the main and principal afflictions which befall you, but also in their accessories and accidents. Many could be content to have afflictions, so they might not be prejudiced by them. I am not grieved, says one, that I am become poor, but that by this means I am disabled to pleasure my friends, to bring up my children, and live honourably as I desire. I would not care, says another, were it not the world will think this has come upon me through mine own fault. Another would be content the world should speak ill of him, and would suffer it very patiently, so that none would believe the detractor. Others there are that would willingly have some affliction, but not too much; they are not impatient, say they, that they are sick, but that they

want money to cure themselves, or that they are so great a trouble to those that are about them. But I say, *Philothea*, we must have patience, not only to be sick, but to be sick of that disease which God wills, in that place where He wills, and amongst such persons as He wills, and so of the other tribulations.

4. When any evil shall happen to you, apply such remedies as shall be lawful and pleasing to God, for to do otherwise were to tempt His Divine Majesty; but having done that, attend with an entire resignation the success it shall please God to send. If He permit the remedies to overcome the evil, give Him thanks with humility; if it please Him that the evil overcome the remedies, bless Him with patience.

5. I am of opinion with *St. Gregory*: When you shall be justly accused of any fault you have committed, humble yourself, and confess that you deserve more than the accusation which is laid upon you. But, if you be falsely accused, excuse yourself meekly, denying yourself to be guilty, for you owe that reverence to truth, and to the edification of your neighbour. But if, after your true and lawful excuse, men continue to accuse you, vex not yourself, nor strive to get your excuse admitted; for having done your duty to truth, you must do it also to humility. Thus you shall prejudice neither the care you ought to have of your fame, nor the love you owe to tranquillity, meekness of heart, and humility.

6. Complain as little as you can of the wrongs done you; for ordinarily he that complains sins, because self-love ever makes us believe injuries to be greater than they are. But above all complain not to such persons as are prone to malice, and to think ill. If it be expedient to make your complaint to

any, either to redress your injury, or to quiet your mind, let it be done to the peaceable, and to such as truly love God ; for otherwise, instead of easing your heart, they will provoke it to greater disquiet, and, instead of pulling out the thorn that pricketh you, they will fasten it deeper into your foot.

7. Many being sick, afflicted, and injured, refrain from complaining or showing any tenderness, judging, and that rightly, that it would too evidently testify want of courage and generosity ; but yet they desire extremely, and by subtleties endeavour, to make other men bemoan them, take compassion on them, and esteem them, not only afflicted, but patient and courageous. Now this is a patience indeed, but a false one, which in effect is nothing else but a fine and subtle ambition and vanity. *They have glory,* says the Apostle, *but not before God* (Rom. iv. 2). The true patient man neither complains of his evils, nor desires to be lamented ; he speaks of them clearly, truly, and simply, without lamentations, complaints, or aggravations ; if he be pitied, he patiently suffers himself to be pitied, unless they bemoan him for some cross which he has not ; for then will he modestly declare that he has no such misfortune, and, in this sort, continues peaceably between truth and patience, confessing, not complaining of his afflictions.

8. In the contradictions which befall you in the exercise of devotion, for they will not be wanting, remember the words of our Saviour : *A woman when she is in travail hath anguish, because her hour is come : but when she hath brought forth her child, then she remembereth not the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world* (John xvi. 21). For you have conceived in your soul the noblest child in the world, to wit,

Jesus Christ, and until Christ be born again in your hearts, you cannot choose but suffer excessive pains ; but be of good courage, these dolours once passed, the everlasting joy shall remain with you of having brought forth such a child to the world. Now He shall be wholly brought forth by you, when you shall have formed Him entirely in your heart, and actions, by the imitation of His life.

9. When you shall be sick, offer up all your griefs, pains, and agonies, to the service of our Lord, and beseech Him to unite them with the torments which He suffered for you. Obey your physician, take medicines, meats, and other remedies, for the love of God, remembering the gall He took for your sake ; desire to be cured, that you may serve Him ; grudge not to languish in sickness, that you may obey Him ; and dispose yourself to die, if so it please Him, that you may praise and enjoy Him.

10. Consider that the bees, while they make their honey, live upon a herb that is very bitter, and we, in like manner, can never perform actions of greater meekness and patience, nor better compose the honey of true virtues, than while we eat the bread of bitterness, and live amongst the afflictions. And as the honey which is gathered from thyme, a little bitter herb, is the best of all, so the virtue which is exercised in the bitterness of base and most abject tribulations, is the most excellent of all.

11. Look often with your interior eyes on Christ Jesus, crucified, naked, blasphemed, slandered, forsaken, and, in a word, overwhelmed with all sorts of sorrows, griefs, and persecutions, and consider that all your sufferings, neither in quality nor quantity, are in any sort comparable to His, and that you can

never suffer anything for Him in comparison of that which He has endured for you.

12. Consider the torments which heretofore the martyrs suffered, and those which many now endure, more grievous, without any proportion, than yours, and say: Alas! my pains are consolations, and my griefs pleasures in comparison of those who without relief, assistance, or mitigation, live in a perpetual death, overcharged with afflictions infinitely heavier than mine.

IMITATION — BK. III., CH. XII. — OF ACQUIRING
PATIENCE AND OF STRIVING AGAINST CON-
CUPISCENCE.

DISCIPLE. 1. O Lord God, patience, as I perceive, is very necessary for me; this life is exposed to many adversities.

For notwithstanding all I can do to live in peace, my life cannot be without war and sorrow.

CHRIST. 2. So it is, son; but I would not have thee seek for such a peace, as to be without temptations, or to meet with no adversities;

But even then to think thou hast found peace, when thou shalt be exercised with divers tribulations, and tried in many adversities.

If thou shalt say, thou art not able to suffer so much, how then wilt thou endure the fire of purgatory?

Of two evils one ought always to choose the least.

That thou mayest, therefore, escape the everlasting punishments to come, labour to endure present evils with patience for God's sake.

Dost thou think the men of this world suffer little or nothing? Thou shalt not find it so, though thou seek out for the most delicate.

3. But thou wilt say they have many delights, and follow their own wills; and therefore make small account of their tribulations.

4. Suppose it to be so, that they have all they desire, how long dost thou think this will last?

Behold they shall vanish away like smoke that abound in this world, and there shall be no remembrance of their past joys.

Nay, even whilst they are living, they enjoy them not, without a mixture of bitterness, irksomeness, and fear.

For the very same thing, in which they conceive a delight, doth often bring upon them a punishment of sorrow.

It is but just it should be so with them, that since they inordinately seek and follow their pleasures, they should not satisfy them without confusion and uneasiness.

Oh! how short, how deceitful, how inordinate and filthy, are these pleasures!

Yet through sottishness and blindness, men understand this not; but like brute beasts, for a small pleasure in this mortal life, they incur the eternal death of their souls.

But thou, My son, *Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will* (Eccli. xviii. 30).

Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart (Ps. xxxvi. 4).

5. For if thou wilt be delighted in truth, and receive more abundant consolation from Me, behold in the contempt of all worldly things, and in the renouncing all those mean pleasures, thou shalt be blessed, and an exceeding great comfort be derived to thy soul.

And the more thou withdrawest thyself from all comfort in things created, the more sweet and the more powerful consolations wilt thou find in Me.

But thou shalt not at first attain to these, without some sorrow and labour in the conflict.

The old custom will stand in thy way, but by a better custom it shall be overcome.

The flesh will complain, but by the fervour of the spirit it shall be kept under.

The old serpent will tempt thee and give thee trouble, but by prayer he shall be put to flight: moreover, by keeping thyself always employed in some useful labour, his access to thee shall be in a great measure impeded.

CH. XVIII.—THAT TEMPORAL MISERIES ARE TO BE BORNE WITH EQUANIMITY, AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

CHRIST. 1. Son, I came down from heaven for thy salvation; I took upon Me thy miseries, not of necessity, but moved thereto by charity, that thou mightest learn patience, and mightest bear, without repining, the miseries of this life.

For, from the hour of My birth, till My expiring on the cross, I was never without suffering.

I underwent a great want of temporal things; I frequently heard many complaints against Me; I meekly bore with confusion and reproaches; for My benefits, I received ingratitude; for My miracles, blasphemies; and for My heavenly doctrine, reproaches.

DISCIPLE. 2. Lord, because Thou wast patient in Thy life-time, in this chiefly fulfilling the commandment of Thy Father, it is fitting that I, a wretched sinner, should, according to Thy will, take all with patience; and, as long as Thou pleasest, support the burden of this corruptible life, in order to my salvation.

For though this present life be burdensome, yet it is now become, through Thy grace, very meritorious; and by the help of Thy example, and the footsteps of Thy saints, more supportable to the weak, and more lightsome.

It is also much more comfortable than it was formerly under the old law, when the gate of heaven remained shut, and the way to heaven seemed more

obscure ; when few concerned themselves to seek the kingdom of heaven.

Neither could they, who were then just and to be saved, enter into Thy heavenly kingdom, before Thy passion, and the payment of our debt by Thy sacred death.

3. Oh ! how great thanks am I obliged to return to Thee, for having vouchsafed to show me and all the faithful a right and good way to an everlasting kingdom.

For Thy life is our way : and by holy patience we walk on to Thee, who art our crown.

If Thou hadst not gone before and instructed us, who would have cared to have followed ?

Alas ! how many would have stayed afar off, and a great way behind, if they had not before their eyes Thy excellent example ?

Behold, we are still tepid, notwithstanding all the miracles and instructions we have heard : what, then, would it be, if we had not this great light whereby to follow Thee ?

LESSON XXXIII.

Of Exterior and Interior Humility: That we ought to walk before God in Truth and Humility: Of Humble Submission.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light.—Matt. xi. 9.

At that hour the disciples came to Jesus saying: Who thinkest thou is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus, calling unto him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. xviii. 1.

For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.—Gal. vi. 3.

Being of one mind one towards another. Not minding high things, but consenting to the humble. Be not wise in your own conceits.—Rom. xii. 16.

Let nothing be done through contention, neither by vain-glory: but in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves: each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's. For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be

equal with God; but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.—Phil. ii. 3.

These words are enough to declare the necessity, utility, and desirableness of humility. The practice both masters will explain.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. IV.—OF EXTERIOR HUMILITY.

1. *Borrow and take many empty vessels*, said *Eliseus* to the poor widow, and *pour oil into them* (4 Kings iv.). To receive the grace of God into our hearts, they must be void of vain-glory. The kestrel, scolding and looking at larger birds of prey, affrights them by a secret property and virtue, therefore doves love her above all other birds, and live in security with her; so humility repels Satan, and conserves the grace and gifts of the Holy Ghost in us, and therefore all the saints, but especially the King of saints and His Blessed Mother, have always more esteemed this virtue than any other amongst moral virtues. We call the glory *vain* which we assume to ourselves, either for that which is not in us, or for that which is in us, and is ours, but deserves not that we should glory in it. Nobility of blood, favour of great persons, popular honour—these are things

which are not in us, but either in our progenitors, or in the estimation of other men. Some there are that become proud and insolent by being upon a good horse, or for having a feather in their hat, or by wearing fine clothes. But who sees not this folly? For if there be any glory in this, it belongs to the horse, the bird, and the tailor; and what a want of courage it is to borrow estimation from a horse, from a feather, or from a flounce. Others esteem and value themselves for moustaches turned up, or a well-trimmed beard, for curled locks, for soft hands, or because they can dance, sing, or play; but are not those effeminate fops, who seek to raise their value and increase their reputation, by such frivolous and foolish things? Others for a little knowledge would be honoured and respected in the world, as if every one ought to come to school to them, and account them their masters, and therefore they are called pedants. Others strut like peacocks in contemplation of their beauty, and think all the world in love with them. All this is extremely vain, foolish, and impertinent, and glory grounded upon such weak foundations is called vain, silly, and frivolous.

2. True goodness is known as true balm; for balm is tried by dropping it in water. If it sink down to the bottom, it is counted the most excellent and precious. Even so, to know whether a man be truly wise, learned, generous, and noble, observe whether his gifts tend to humility, modesty, and submission, for then they shall be true virtues; but if they swim above water, and strive to appear, they are so much the less true by how much the more they shall be apparent.

3. Pearls that are conceived and nourished during

tempests and the noise of thunder, have nothing but the shell of pearl, and are void of substance, so the virtues and good qualities bred and nourished in pride, boasting, and vanity, have nothing but a simple appearance of good, without sap, without marrow, and without solidity.

4. Honours, degrees, and dignities are like saffron, which prospers best, and grows most plentifully, when trodden under feet. It is no honour to be fair, when one praises oneself for it; beauty, to have a good grace, should be neglected; knowledge dishonours us when it puffs us up, and degenerates into pedantry.

5. If we be punctilious in dignities, precedencies, and titles, besides the exposing of our qualities to be examined, tried, and contradicted, we make them vile and contemptible; for honour, which is estimable, being freely given, becomes base when it is sought for, required, and exacted.

6. When the peacock bristles up his train to admire himself, in raising his fair feathers he parades his worst deformities. Fair flowers that grow on the earth wither away by handling. The sweet smell of the mandragora taken afar off, and but for a short time, is most pleasing, but they that smell it very near and a long time become stupefied and sick; even so honours give a pleasant consolation to those that savour them afar off, and carelessly, without staying on them or disquieting themselves with them: but such as affect them, and feed on them, are worthy of blame and reprehension.

7. The pursuit and love of virtue begins to make us virtuous, but the pursuit and love of honour begins to make us abject and contemptible. Generous spirits busy not themselves about these poor toys of

degrees of honour and salutation; they have other things to do; that belongs to mean and degenerate spirits.

8. He that may have pearls never loads himself with shells, and such as aspire to virtue vex not themselves for honours. Every one indeed may take the place due to him, without prejudice to humility, so that it be done carelessly, and not with contention. For as they that come from *Peru*, besides gold and silver, bring also apes and parrots, because they neither cost much nor are burdensome to their ship; so true pretenders to virtue neglect not to take rank and place due to them; yet so as it cost them not much care and attention, and that it may be without incurring trouble, disquiet, disputes, and contentions. Yet speak I not here of those whose dignity concerns the public, nor of certain particular occasions on which great consequences depend; for then every one ought to keep his due place with prudence and discretion, accompanied with charity and courtesy.

CH. V.—OF INTERNAL HUMILITY.

1. But you desire, *Philothea*, to be further advanced in humility; for the performance of what we have hitherto said is rather wisdom than humility; let us therefore pass on farther. Many neither will nor dare consider the graces God has given them in particular, fearing that thereby they may fall into vain-glory and self-conceit: wherein, in truth, they deceive themselves; for since the true means to attain to the love of God, as says the great angelical Doctor, is the consideration of His benefits, the more we know them, the more we shall love Him; and as particular benefits more powerfully move us than common, so ought they to be weighed more attentively.

2. Certainly nothing can so much humble us before the mercy of God as the multitude of His benefits, nor before His justice as the multitude of our offences. Let us then consider what He has done for us, and what we have done against Him; and as we consider our sins severally, so let us consider His graces one by one. Let us not fear that the knowledge He gives us will puff us up, so long as we are attentive to this truth, *that whatsoever is good in us is not of ourselves.*

3. Alas! do mules cease to be lumpish and stinking beasts because they are laden with the precious and perfumed baggage of the Prince? *What hast thou which thou hast not received*, says the Apostle, *and if thou hast received it why dost thou glory?* (1 Cor. iv. 7). Nay, contrariwise, the lively consideration of favours received renders us humble, because knowledge begets acknowledgment. But if, in considering the favours God has done us, any kind of vanity should tickle us, it will be an infallible remedy to recur to the contemplation of our ingratitude, of our imperfections, and of our miseries. If we consider what we did when God was not with us, we shall easily know that what we do while He is with us is not of our own doing, nor of our own growth; we shall enjoy it indeed, and rejoice for it, but we shall glorify God alone, because He is the author of it. So the Blessed Virgin confesses that God had done great things for her; yet it is but to humble herself, and to glorify God. *My soul*, says she, *doth magnify the Lord, because He hath done great things for me* (Luke i. 46).

4. We use to say many times that we are nothing, that we are misery itself, and the corruption of the world, but we would be loath any man should take us

at our word, and publish us abroad to be such as we say we are. Nay, we make as if we would run away and hide ourselves, to the end men may run after us, and seek us out; we make show as if we would indeed be the last, and sit at the lowest end of the table, but it is in hope to be set with more advantage at the upper end. True humility never makes show of herself, nor uses many humble words; for she desires not only to hide other virtues, but also principally to hide herself. And if it were lawful for her to lie, to dissemble, or scandalise her neighbour, she would produce actions of arrogancy and disdain, that under them she might hide herself, and be altogether covered and unknown.

5. My advice therefore is, *Philothea*, either let us use no words of humility, or let us use them with an inward reality, conformable to what we pronounce outwardly. Let us never cast down our eyes, but when we humble our hearts; let us not seem to desire to be the lowest, unless we mean it from our heart. Now I hold this rule so general, that I bring no exception; only I add that civility requires that we offer precedency sometimes to those who without doubt will refuse it, and yet this is no double-dealing nor false humility; for in this case the mere offer of precedency is a beginning of honour, and since we cannot give it them entirely, we do not ill to give them the beginning. I say the same of some words of honour and respect, which in rigour seem not true, yet are true enough indeed, if the heart of him that pronounces them have a true intention to honour and respect him to whom he says these words. For although the words signify, with some excess, that which we would say, yet we do not ill to use them when com-

mon custom requires it; but I wish our words were always suited to our affections, as near as possible to follow in all, and through all, pure simplicity and sincerity of heart. A man that is truly humble would rather another should say of him that he is miserable, that he is contemptible, and that he is nothing worth, than to say it himself; at least if he knows any man says so, he does not gainsay it, but consents to it with all his heart; for believing it firmly himself, he is glad to have others of the same opinion.

6. Many say that they leave mental prayer for those that are perfect, that themselves are not worthy to use it. Others protest that they dare not communicate often, because they find not themselves pure enough. Others that they fear they should disgrace devotion, if they should meddle with it, by reason of their great misery and frailty. Others refuse to employ their talent in God's service and their neighbour's, because, say they, they know their own weakness, and that they fear to become proud if they should be instruments of any good, and that in giving light to others they should consume themselves.

7. All this is nothing but artifice, and a kind of humility not only false but malicious, whereby tacitly and subtilely they endeavour to cast an aspersion upon these holy things, or at the best with the cloak of humility to cover the love of their own opinion, their own humour, and their own slothfulness. *Demand of God a sign either from heaven above, or from the depth of the sea below* (Isa. vii. 11), said the prophet to unhappy Achaz, and he answered: *I will demand none, neither will I tempt God.* O wicked man! he would seem to bear great reverence to God, and under colour of humility excuse himself from aspiring to that grace

which God's goodness offers him ; but sees he not that when our Lord offers us His graces it is pride to refuse them, that the gifts of God oblige us to receive them, and that true humility is to obey and follow His will as near as we can ? But God's will is that we become perfect, uniting ourselves to Him, and imitating Him the best we can.

8. The proud man, who trusts in himself, has just occasion not to dare to undertake anything ; but he that is humble is so much the more courageous by how much the more weak he acknowledges himself, and the more miserable he esteems himself the more confident he becomes, because he trusts entirely in God, who delights to magnify His omnipotence by our infirmity, His mercy by our misery. We must, then, with an humble and holy confidence, perform whatsoever is judged fit for our advancement by those that direct our souls.

9. To think we know what we know not, is direct folly, to pretend to know what all are aware we know not, is an intolerable vanity. For my part, I would not seem to know even what I do know, as contrariwise, I would not make myself out to be ignorant thereof. When charity requires it, we must freely and mildly communicate to our neighbour not only what is necessary for his instruction, but also what is profitable for his consolation ; for humility, which hides and conceals virtues to the end to preserve them, discovers them nevertheless when charity requires it, in order to enlarge, increase, and perfect them. Wherein she resembles a tree in the Isles of *Tylos* which at night closes up her carnation flowers, and opens them not till the rising of the sun, so that the inhabitants of the country say that those flowers sleep

by night—for so humility covers and hides all our virtues and human perfections, and lets them never appear but for the sake of charity, which being a virtue not human but heavenly, not mortal, but Divine, is the true sun of virtues, over which she ought always to rule; so that humility which is prejudicial to charity is undoubtedly false.

10. I would make myself neither a fool nor a sage; for humility forbids me to counterfeit myself wise, honesty and sincerity forbid me likewise to counterfeit myself a fool; and as vanity is contrary to humility, so are affectation and dissembling to simplicity and plain dealing. And if some great servants of God have made themselves seem fools that they might be thought abject in the eyes of the world, we must admire them and not imitate them; for they had motives which induced them to this excess, which were so particular and extraordinary to themselves that no man ought from thence to draw any consequence for himself. And as for *David*, when he danced and leaped before the Ark somewhat more than ordinary decorum required, he did it not to make the world believe he was a fool, but he simply and plainly used exterior motions, conformable to the extraordinary and excessive gladness he conceived in his heart. True it is, that when *Michol* his wife reproached him for it as an act of folly, he was not sorry to see himself despised, but persevering in a true and lively representation of his joy, he testified that he was glad to receive a little shame for his God. And consequently, I say, that if for acts of true devotion the world esteem you mean, abject, and foolish, humility will make you rejoice at this happy reproach, the cause whereof is not in you, but in those that utter it against you.

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. IV.—THAT WE OUGHT TO WALK BEFORE GOD IN TRUTH AND HUMILITY.

CHRIST. 1. Son, walk before Me in *truth*, and always seek Me in the simplicity of thy heart.

He that walks before Me in *truth*, shall be secured from evil occurrences ; and *truth* shall deliver him from deceivers, and from the detraction of the wicked.

If *truth* be on thy side, thou wilt be free from all anxiety and unconcerned at all that vain man can say against thee.

DISCIPLE. Lord, this is true ; as Thou sayest so, I beseech Thee, let it be done with me. Let Thy *truth* teach me, let Thy *truth* guard me, and keep me till I come to a happy end.

Let the same deliver me from all evil affections and all inordinate love, and I shall walk with Thee in great liberty of heart.

2. I will teach thee (saith *truth*) those things that are right and pleasing in my sight.

Think on thy sins with great compunction and sorrow ; and never esteem thyself to be anything for thy good works.

Thou art indeed a sinner, subject to, and entangled with many passions.

3. Of thyself thou always tendest to nothing, thou quickly fallest, thou art quickly overcome, easily disturbed and dissolved.

Thou hast not anything in which thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to vilify thyself ; for thou art much weaker than thou art able to comprehend.

4. Let nothing, then, seem much to thee of all thou doest.

Let nothing appear great, nothing valuable or admirable, nothing worthy of esteem, nothing high, nothing truly praiseworthy or desirable, but what is eternal.

Let the *eternal truth* please thee above all things, and thy own exceeding vileness ever displease thee.

Fear nothing so much, blame and abhor nothing so much as thy vices and sins, which ought to displease thee more than any losses whatsoever.

Some persons walk not sincerely before Me; but being led with a certain curiosity and pride, desire to know the hidden things of My providence, and to understand the high things of God, neglecting themselves and their own salvation.

These often fall into great temptations and sins, through their 'pride and curiosity; because I stand against them.

5. Fear the judgments of God; dread the anger of the Almighty; presume not to examine the works of the Most High; but search into thine own iniquities, how many ways thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected.

6. Some only carry their devotion in their books, some in pictures, and some in outward signs and figures.

Some have Me in their mouth, but little in their heart.

There are others, who being enlightened in their understanding, and purified in their affections, always breathe of things eternal, are unwilling to hear of earthly things, and grieve to be subject to the necessities of nature; and such as these perceive what the spirit of *truth* speaks in them.

For it teaches them to despise the things of the earth, and to love heavenly things; to neglect the world, and all the day and night to aspire after heaven.

IMITATION—BK. II., CH. II.—OF HUMBLE SUBMISSION.

1. Make no great account who is for thee, or against thee; but let it be thy business, and thy care, that God may be with thee in everything that thou doest.

Have a good conscience, and God will sufficiently defend thee.

For he whom God will help, no man's malice can hurt.

If thou canst but hold thy peace and suffer, thou shalt see without doubt that the Lord will help thee.

He knows the time and manner of delivering thee, and therefore thou must resign thyself to Him.

It belongs to God to help and to deliver us from all confusion.

Oftentimes it is very profitable for the keeping us in greater humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbles himself for his defects, he then easily appeases others, and quickly satisfies those who are angry with him.

The humble man God protects and delivers; the humble He loves and comforts; to the humble He inclines Himself; to the humble He gives grace, and after he has been depressed, raises him to glory.

To the humble He reveals His secrets, and sweetly draws and invites him to Himself.

The humble man having received reproach, maintains himself well enough in peace, because he is fixed in God, and not in the world.

Never think thou hast made any progress, till thou look upon thyself as inferior to all.

LESSON XXXIV.

That Humility makes us Love our own Abjection :
How to keep our Good Name in the Practice
of Humility : Of Bearing Injuries : Against the
Tongues of Detractors.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp; bearing his reproach.—Heb. xiii. 12.

Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses.—2 Cor. vi. 3.

Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling: or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good: for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.—1 Pet. ii. 13.

But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection. And others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons: they were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins, being in want, distressed, afflicted: of whom the world was not worthy.—Heb. xi. 35.

Blessed shall you be when men hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast

out your name as evil, for the son of man's sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice ; for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For according to these things did their fathers to the prophets.—Luke vi. 22.

These words teach us love of our own abjection, the right way to preserve our good name, and the spirit in which insults and injuries should be borne. The practice is explained in what follows.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. VI.—THAT HUMILITY
MAKES US LOVE OUR OWN ABJECTION.

1. I go further, and advise you, *Philothea*, that in all things and everywhere you love your own abjection. But you will ask me what it is to love our own abjection ? In Latin abjection signifies humility and humility abjection ; so that when Our Blessed Lady in her sacred hymn says that all generations should call her Blessed, because God had seen the humility of His Handmaid, her meaning is that the Lord beheld graciously her abjection and lowliness, to heap upon her graces and favours. Yet there is great difference between the virtue of humility and abjection ; for abjection is the lowness, bareness, and poorness that is in us, we being not aware of it ; but as for the virtue of humility, it is a true knowledge and voluntary acknowledgment of our abjection.

2. Now the principal point of this humility consists not only in this willing acknowledgment of our abjection, but in loving it and delighting in it, not for want of courage or generosity, but to extol so much the more the Divine Majesty, and esteem our neighbour so much better than ourselves. This is that to which I exhort you ; and that you may understand it

the better, know that among the afflictions which we suffer, some are abject, and others honourable : many can frame themselves to the honourable, but almost none to the abject. You see a devout hermit, all ragged and cold, each one honours his torn habit, with compassion of his sufferance ; but if a poor tradesman, or a poor gentleman be in the same case, men despise and mock them, and behold how their poverty is abject. A religious man receives devoutly a sharp censure of his superior, and a child of his father, and all count this mortification, obedience and wisdom, but let a cavalier or some lady suffer the like of another, and although it be for the love of God, men will call it cowardliness and poltroonery.

3. Behold here another abjection. One has a canker in his arm, and another in his face ; the first has only the disease, but the other with the disease has contempt, shame, and abjection. I say, then, that we must not only love the evil itself, which is done by the virtue of patience, but we must also love the abjection, which is done by the virtue of humility.

4. Moreover, there are abject virtues, and honourable virtues. Patience, meekness, simplicity, and humility itself are virtues which worldly men hold vile and abject ; on the contrary they much esteem wisdom, valour, and liberality. There are also actions of one and the same virtue, whereof some are despised, and others honoured ; to give alms, and to pardon injuries, are two acts of charity—the first is honoured of all men, the other condemned in the eyes of the world. A young gentleman or gentlewoman who will not give themselves over to the disorders of a wild set, to talk, play, dance, drink, dress, shall be scorned

and censured, and their modesty termed hypocrisy or affectation : to love this, is to love our abjection.

5. Behold another sort of abjection. We go to visit the sick : if I am sent to the most miserable, that will be an abjection to me, according to the world, and therefore I will love it. If I am sent to a person of quality, it is an abjection to the spirit ; for there is not so much virtue or merit, and therefore I will love this abjection. One falls in the midst of the street, and besides his hurt receives shame ; this is an abjection to be loved. There are also faults which have no other ill in them but only the abjection, and humility requires not that we should commit them of set purpose, but it requires that we vex not ourselves when we shall have committed them. Such are certain fooleries, incivilities, and incircumspections, which as we ought to avoid before they are committed out of civility and discretion, so when they are committed, we must be content with the abjection that comes thereby, and accept it willingly, that so we may practise holy humility.

6. I say yet more, if I have been carried away through passion or dissipation, and have spoken unbecoming words, wherewith God and my neighbour are offended, I will repent myself heartily with true sorrow, and endeavour to make the best reparation I can for the offence ; but yet I will be content with the abjection and shame it brings with it, and if the one could be separated from the other, I would most cheerfully cast away the sin, and humbly retain the abjection.

7. But though we love the abjection which follows the evil, yet we must not neglect to redress the evil that caused it, by fit and lawful means, especially

when the evil is of importance. If I have some shameful disease in my face, I will endeavour to have it cured, but not to have the abjection forgotten which I received by it. If I have committed some folly which is offensive to none, I will make no excuse for it; because, although it were a fault, yet it is not permanent; I cannot, then, excuse it, but only in respect of the abjection it brings me; and that humility permits not. But if, through folly or indiscretion, I have offended or scandalized any one, I will repair the offence by some true excuse, because the evil is permanent, and charity obliges me to remove it. Furthermore, it happens sometimes that charity commands us to remove the abjection, for the good of our neighbour, to whom our reputation is necessary; but in that case, though we remove the abjection from before our neighbour's eyes to prevent his scandal, yet must we carefully shut it up and hide it in our heart, for its edification.

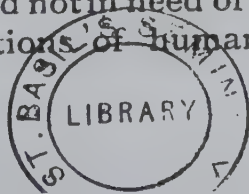
8. But you would know, *Philothea*, which are the best abjections. I tell you clearly that the most profitable to our souls, and most acceptable to God, are those which come to us by accident, or by the condition of our life; because we choose them not, but receive them as they are sent by God, whose choice is always better than our own. But if we were to choose them, the greatest are the best; and those are esteemed the greatest which are most contrary to our inclinations, so that they be conformable to our vocation; for, so to speak, our own choice blasts all our virtues.

9. Oh who will give us the grace to say truly with that great king, *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of*

*sinner*s? (Ps. lxxxiii. 11). None certainly, dear *Philothea*, but He who, to exalt us, lived and died in such sort that He was *the scorn of men, and the abjection of the people* (Ps. xxi. 7). I have said many things to you which will seem hard when you shall consider them; but believe me, they will be sweeter than sugar or honey when you shall put them in practice.

CH. VII.—HOW TO KEEP OUR GOOD NAME IN THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY.

1. Praise, honour, and glory are not given to men for every ordinary virtue, but for some excellent one. For by praise we seek to persuade others to value the excellency of some men; by honour we protest that we ourselves esteem them; and glory, in my judgment, is nothing else but a certain lustre of reputation, which springs from the union of many praises and honours. So that honours and praises are like precious stones, from a heap of which rises a lustre like enamelling. Now humility, not being able to endure that we should have any desire of excelling or being preferred before others, cannot also permit that we should hunt after praise, honour, or glory, which are due to excellency alone; but yet she consents to the counsel of the Wise Man, who admonishes us to have a care of our reputation, because a good name is an estimation not of any excellence, but only of simple and ordinary honesty and integrity of life, which humility hinders us not to acknowledge in ourselves, nor by consequence to desire the reputation of it. It is true that humility would condemn good fame, if charity stood not in need of it; but because it is one of the foundations of human society, and



that without it we are not only unprofitable but prejudicial to the public, by reason of the scandal, charity requires, and humility consents, that we should desire it and carefully preserve it.

2. Again, as leaves, which in themselves are of no great value, are nevertheless very necessary not only to beautify the trees, but also to preserve the fruit whilst it is young and tender; so a good report, which of itself is not much to be desired, is notwithstanding most profitable, not only for the ornament of our life, but also for the preservation of our virtues, especially while they are yet weak and tender. The obligation of maintaining our reputation, and of being such as we are esteemed to be, forces a generous courage. Let us preserve our virtues, dear *Philothea*, because they are acceptable to God, the chief and sovereign Object of all our actions. But as they who would keep fruit are not content to preserve them with sugar, but put them all in vessels fit to keep them; so although the love of God is the principal preserver of our virtues, yet may we further employ our good name, as most convenient and profitable to that purpose.

3. Yet we must not be over earnest, exact, and punctilious in this preservation; for such as are so touchy and sensitive about their reputation are like those that for every slight indisposition take physic; for they, thinking to conserve their health, utterly overthrow it, and these, endeavouring to maintain so tenderly their reputation, entirely lose it; for, by their touchiness, they become fantastical, froward, insolent, and provoke the malice of detractors.

4. Dissimulation, and contempt of an injury or calumny, is ordinarily a far better remedy than

resentment, dispute, or revenge ; for contempt causes them to vanish, whereas, if we resent them, we seem to avow them. Crocodiles hurt none but those that fear them, nor detraction any but such as vex themselves with it. Excessive fear of losing our good name argues a great distrust of its foundation, which is the truth of a good life. Towns that have wooden bridges over great rivers fear their being carried away by every little flood, but those that have them of stone fear only extraordinary inundations ; so they that have a soul truly Christian ordinarily condemn the overflowing of injurious tongues, but those that find themselves weak are disquieted with every discourse. Indeed, *Philothea*, he that strives to keep a good reputation with all, loses it with all, and he deserves to lose his honour who seeks it of those whose vices make them infamous and dishonourable.

5. Reputation is but a sign to show where virtue is lodged ; it is virtue, then, that must be preferred in all and before all. Wherefore, if any call you hypocrite because you give yourself to devotion, or esteem you a coward because you have pardoned any injury, laugh at all that ; for, besides that such judgments are made by foolish and ignorant people, we must not forsake virtue, nor wander out of the way of it, although we were to lose our reputation ; because we must prefer the fruit before the leaves, and interior and spiritual before all external good. It is lawful to be jealous of our reputation, but not idolatrous of our reputation, and, as we must not offend the eyes of the good, so we must not strive to satisfy those of the wicked. The beard is an ornament to the face of a man, and the hair to that of a woman : if one pull away by the roots the beard from the chin, and the

hair from the head, it will hardly grow again ; but if it be only cut, nay, though it be shaved, it will soon come again, and will grow stronger and thicker than before ; so although our reputation be cut, yea, though it be shaven by detracting tongues, which, David says, *are like sharp razors* (Ps. li. 4), we must not, therefore, be troubled, for it will soon spring forth again not only as fair as ever it was, but much more firm and durable. But if, nevertheless, our vices, our unworthiness, and wicked course of life, take away our reputation, it will very hardly return because it is pulled up by the root ; for the root of renown is goodness and integrity, which, as long as they are in us, can always recover the honours due to them.

6. When vain conversation, frivolous friendship, and haunting of idle company blast our reputation, we must forsake them ; for a good name is of more price than all vain contentments. But if, for the exercise of piety, for advancement in devotion, and aspiring to eternal happiness, men grumble and murmur at us, let us leave these dogs to bark against the moon, for if they are at any time able to cast an aspersion on our good name, and by that means cut and shave the hair and beard of our reputation, these will notwithstanding spring up again, and the razor of detraction will be as advantageous to our honour as the pruning knife to the vine, which makes it abound and multiply in fruit.

7. Let us fix our eyes always upon Jesus Christ crucified, and march on in His service with confidence and sincerity, yet prudently and discreetly : He will be the protector of our reputation, and if He suffer it to be taken from us, it will be either to render us better, or to make us profit in holy humility, whereof

only one ounce is better than a thousand pounds of honours. If we are unjustly defamed, let us meekly oppose truth against calumny; if calumny persevere, let us likewise persevere in humility, resigning our reputation together with our soul into God's hands; we cannot secure it better. Let us serve God in good and ill fame, according to *St. Paul's* example, that we may say with *David*, *For Thee, O Lord have I suffered shame, and confusion hath covered my face* (Ps. lxxviii. 8). I except, nevertheless, certain crimes, so horrid and infamous, that no man ought to suffer the shame of them if he can justly acquit himself; and also certain persons, on whose reputation depends the edification of many; for, in these cases, we must peaceably seek reparation for the wrong received, according to the opinion of all divines.

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. XIX.—OF SUPPORTING INJURIES; AND OF HIM WHO IS PROVED TO BE TRULY PATIENT.

CHRIST. I. What is it thou sayest, My son? Cease to complain, considering My passion, and the sufferings of the saints.

Thou hast not yet resisted unto blood.

What thou sufferest is but little, in comparison to them who have suffered so much, who have been so strongly tempted, so grievously afflicted, so many ways tried and exercised.

Thou must, then, call to mind the heavy sufferings of others, that thou mayest the easier bear the little things thou sufferest.

And if to thee they seem not little, take heed lest this also proceed from thy impatience.

But whether they be little or great strive to bear them all with patience.

2. The better thou disposest thyself for suffering, the more wisely dost thou act, and the more dost thou merit; and thou wilt bear it more easily, thy mind being well prepared for it, and accustomed to it.

Do not say, I cannot take these things from such a man, and things of this kind are not to be suffered by me, for he has done me a great injury, and he upbraids me with things I never thought on; but I will suffer willingly from another, and as far as I shall judge fitting for me to suffer.

Such a thought is foolish, which considers not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned; but rather weighs the person and the offences committed.

3. He is not a truly patient man who will suffer no more than he thinks good, and from whom he pleaseth.

The truly patient man minds not by whom it is he is exercised; whether by his superior, or by one of his equals, or by an inferior; whether by a good and holy man, or by one that is perverse and unworthy.

But how much soever, and how often soever, any adversity happens to him, from anything created, he takes it all with equality of mind, as from the hand of God, with thanksgiving, and esteems it a great gain.

For nothing, how little soever, that is suffered for God's sake, can pass without merit in the sight of God.

4. Be thou, therefore, ready prepared to fight, if thou desirest to gain the victory.

Without fighting, thou canst not obtain the crown of patience.

If thou wilt not suffer thou refusest to be crowned; but if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently.

Without labour there is no coming to rest, nor without fighting can the victory be obtained.

DISCIPLE. 5. May Thy grace, O Lord, make that possible to me, which seems impossible to me by nature.

Thou knowest that I can bear but little, and that I am quickly cast down by a small adversity.

Let all exercises of tribulation become amiable and agreeable to me, for Thy name's sake; for to suffer and to be afflicted for Thee is very healthful for my soul.

CH. XXVIII.—AGAINST THE TONGUES OF DETRACTORS.

CHRIST.

1. Son, take it not to heart if some people think ill of thee, and say of thee what thou art not willing to hear.

Thou oughtest to think worse of thyself, and to believe that no one is weaker than thyself.

If thou walkest *interiorly*, thou wilt make small account of flying words.

It is no small prudence to be silent in the evil time, and to turn within to Me, and not to be disturbed with the judgments of men.

2. Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men; for whether they put a good or bad construction on what thou doest, thou art still what thou art.

Where is true peace and true glory? Is it not in Me?

And he who covets not to please men, nor fears their displeasure, shall enjoy much peace.

All disquiet of heart and distraction of the senses arise from inordinate love and vain fear.

LESSON XXXV.

Of Meekness towards our Neighbour, and Remedies against Anger: Of Meekness towards Ourselves: Of Bearing the Defects of Others: Of not Desponding because we Fall into some Defects.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.—Matt. xi. 29.

Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.—Gal. vi. 1.

Bear ye one another's burdens: and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ.—Gal. vi. 2.

My son, keep thy soul in meekness, and give it honour according to its desert.—Eccli. x. 31.

Let all bitterness and anger, and indignation and clamour, and blasphemy be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another even as God hath forgiven you in Christ.—Ephes. iv. 31.

And the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.—Phil. iv. 7.

These words show the excellence of meekness, and the necessity of observing its rules; and your two masters will now explain to you the practice of this virtue, which may well be called the flower of charity.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. VIII.—OF MEEKNESS TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOURS, AND REMEDIES AGAINST ANGER.

1. The holy Chrism, which, by Apostolical tradition, we use in the Church of God for Confirmations and Consecrations, is composed of oil of olives mingled with balm, which amongst other things represent to us the two dear and beloved virtues which shone in the sacred Person of our Lord, and which He most particularly commended to us, as if by them our heart was specially to be consecrated to His service, and dedicated to His imitation. *Learn of Me*, says He, *for I am meek and humble of heart* (Matt. xi. 29). Humility makes us perfect towards God, and mildness towards our neighbour. The balm which, as I said before, sinks to the bottom, amongst all other liquors, represents humility, and the oil of olives, which swims always above, signifies mildness and affability, which are above all things, and excel amongst virtues as being the flowers of charity, which, according to *St. Bernard*, is then most perfect, when it is not only patient, but also mild and gentle. But take heed also, *Philothea*, that this mystical Chrism, composed of meekness and humility, be within thy heart; for it is one of the greatest subtleties of the enemy to make many entertain themselves with the words and exterior appearance of these two virtues, who not examining thoroughly their inward affections, esteem themselves humble and meek, whereas, in truth, they are not so at all; and this may be easily discovered, because, for all their ceremonious mildness and humility, at the least cross word or injury, they swell with incredible arrogance.

2. They say that those who have taken the preservative commonly called *the Grace of St. Paul*, swell not at all by the biting and stinging of vipers, provided the preservative be of the best ; in like manner, when humility and mildness be good and true, they preserve from the heat and tumours which injuries are wont to raise in men's hearts. But if being stung and bit by detractors and enemies, we become fierce and enraged, it is a sign that our humility and meekness are not true and cordial, but artificial and counterfeit.

3. The holy Patriarch *Joseph*, sending back his brethren from *Egypt*, to his father's house, gave them this only advice, *Be not angry amongst yourselves by the way* (Gen. xlv. 24). I say the same to you, *Philothea* ; this wretched life is but a passage to happiness, let us not be angry one with another in the way, but march with the troop of our brethren and companions meekly, peaceably, and lovingly ; but I say to you absolutely and without exception, be not angry at all, if it be possible, and entertain no pretext whatsoever to open the gate of your heart to anger ; for *St. James* tells us very positively, and without reservation, *The anger of man works not the justice of God* (James i. 20). We must indeed resist the evil, and suppress the vices of those that are under our charge courageously and resolutely, but yet mildly and peaceably. Nothing so soon appeases an enraged elephant as the sight of a little lamb, and nothing so easily breaks the force of a cannon-shot as wool. We esteem not so much the correction which proceeds from passion, though it be accompanied with never so much reason, as that which has no other motive than reason alone ; for the reasonable soul, being naturally subject to reason, is

never subject to passion but through tyranny, and therefore when reason is accompanied with passion she makes herself odious, her just government being corrupted by the fellowship of tyranny.

4. Princes do honour to their people when they visit them with a peaceful train; but when they lead armies, though it be for the common good, their presence is always unwelcome; for although they cause military discipline to be rigorously observed among their soldiers, yet be they never so exact, some disorder will always arise, whereby the countryman will be oppressed. Even so, as long as reason rules, and peaceably exercises chastisement, corrections, and reprehensions, although rigorously and exactly, every man loves and approves, but when she brings with her wrath, choler, and rage, which *St. Augustine* calls her soldiers, she makes herself more feared than loved, and even her own heart becomes thereby vexed and oppressed. It is better, says the same *St. Augustine* writing to *Profuturus*, to deny just and equitable anger than to entertain it, be it never so little because being once admitted it is hard to be quit of it; for it enters as a little twig, and in a moment grows greater and becomes a beam. If it can but once gain the night of us, and that the *sun sets on our anger* (Eph. iv. 26), which the apostle forbids, converting itself into hatred, there is almost no means to be freed from it; for it nourishes itself with a thousand false persuasions, since there was never any angry man that thought his anger unjust.

5. It is better, then, to resolve to live without choler, than to use choler moderately and discreetly; and when, by imperfection and frailty, we find ourselves surprised therewith, it is better to resist it

speedily, than to dally with it; for give it never so little leisure, and it will be mistress of the place, like the serpent, who can easily draw in his whole body where he can get in his head.

6. But you will say how shall I resist it? You must, my *Philothea*, at the first touch you feel of it, speedily assemble your forces, not violently, but mildly, and yet seriously; for as we see in the audiences of divers senates, or courts of justice, the ushers crying *Peace* make more noise than those whom they would silence, so it happens many times that endeavouring with violence to suppress our choler, we stir up more trouble in our hearts than the choler would have done, and the heart thus troubled is no more master of itself. After this meek resistance, practise the advice which *St. Augustine*, being now old, gave to the young bishop *Auxilius*. Do, says he, that which a man should do, if that befall you which befell a man of God mentioned in the Psalm, *My eyes are troubled for anger* (Ps. vi. 8); have recourse to God, crying, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord*, (vi. 3) that He may stretch forth His right hand to repress your anger. I mean, we must invoke the assistance of God when we find ourselves assaulted by choler, in imitation of the Apostles when they were tossed with winds and tempests on the waters; for He will command our passions to cease, and a great calm shall follow. But the prayer made against present and pressing choler must always be meek and calm, and not violent, and this rule is to be observed in all remedies we use against this evil. Moreover, as soon as you perceive that you have done any act of choler, repair the fault by an act of mildness exercised cheerfully towards the same person against whom you were

moved. For as it is a sovereign remedy against a lie to unsay it presently, so it is a good remedy against anger to repair it instantly by a contrary act of mildness, for green wounds, they say, are most easily cured.

7. Again, when you are in tranquillity, and without any occasion of choler, make great provision of meekness and gentleness, speaking all your words and doing all your actions, little and great, in the mildest manner you can; calling to mind that the Spouse in the Canticles has not only honey on her lips, and on the top of her tongue, but also under her tongue, that is in her breast, and not honey only but also milk: for we must not only have our words sweet towards our neighbour, but our whole breast, that is to say, the interior of our soul. Neither must we have only this sweetness of honey, which is pleasant and fragrant, that is to say, sweetness of civil conversation with strangers, but also the sweetness of milk amongst those of our household and our near neighbours; wherein they greatly fail, who in the street seem angels and in their houses devils.

CH. IX.—OF MEEKNESS TOWARDS OURSELVES.

1. One of the best exercises we can perform of meekness, is that whereof the subject is in ourselves, that is, never to be vexed against ourselves, nor our imperfections. For though reason requires that we should be displeased and sorry when we commit any faults; yet we must always avoid all malicious, spiteful, and cholerick displeasure. Herein many highly offend, who, stirred up to choler, are angry and vexed to see themselves vexed, for by this means they keep their hearts steeped in choler, and though the second

anger seems to destroy the first, yet, notwithstanding, it serves to open a passage for a new choler, on the first occasion that shall be offered. Besides, these angers, frettings, and vexations against ourselves tend to pride, and have no other source than self-love, which troubles and disquiets itself to see us imperfect. We must then have a dislike of our faults which should be quiet, sober, and moderate. For as a judge punishes malefactors much better when he squares his sentence by reason, and pronounces it with a calm and quiet spirit, than when he is violently transported with passion, because judging in passion he punishes the faults not according as they are but, according as he himself is, so we correct ourselves much better by calm and sober repentances, than by those which are violent and choleric; for repentance done with violence is never according to the grievousness of our faults, but according to our inclinations. For example, he that loves chastity will vex himself with an incomparable vexation at the least fault he shall commit against that virtue, and will but laugh at a gross slander he shall have uttered. On the other side he that hates detraction will afflict himself for having murmured a little, and make no account of a gross fault committed against chastity, and so of others. And this springs from no other fountain than that they judge their consciences not by reason, but by passion.

2. Believe me, *Philothea*, as the reproofs of a father given sweetly and affectionately have far more power with the child to reclaim him, than choler and anger; so when our heart shall have done any fault, if we reprehend it with a quiet and sweet admonition, having more compassion on it than passion against it, and

gently encouraging it to amendment; the repentance following thereupon will penetrate further, and strike deeper than a vexing, angry, and stormy repentance.

3. For myself, if, for example, I had a great affection not to fall into the sin of vanity, and yet had fallen deep into it, I would not reprehend my heart in this manner: *Art thou not miserable and abominable, that after so many resolutions hast suffered thyself to be carried away by vanity? die with shame, lift no more thy eyes to Heaven, blind, impudent, and traitor to thy God.* But I would rather thus reprehend it in reason and compassion: *Go to, my poor heart, we are now fallen into the ditch we had so often resolved to escape; well, let us out again, and forsake it for ever; let us call upon the mercy of God, and hope that it will assist us to be more constant henceforward, and let us put ourselves into the way of humility. Courage: from this day forward we will stand upon our guard: God will help us, we shall prosper.* And on this reprehension would I build a firm and constant resolution never to fall again into that fault, using to that end the means convenient, especially the advice of my director.

3. But if, notwithstanding, any man find that his heart cannot be sufficiently moved with this sweet reprehension, he may use a more sharp and rough reproof to excite it to a profound confusion, provided that after he has thus roundly rebuked his heart, he end with consolations, closing up all his anger with a sweet and holy confidence in God, imitating that great penitent, who, seeing his soul afflicted, raised it up in this manner: *Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will confess to Him, who is the saving health of my countenance, and my God* (Ps. xli. 6).

5. Raise up, then, your heart fair and softly, when it shall fall, humbling yourself profoundly before God, by acknowledging your own misery, without astonishment at your fall; for it is no wonder that weakness should be feeble, or misery wretched: detest, nevertheless, from your heart, the offence God has received from you, and with great courage, and confidence in His mercy, return to the way of virtue which you had forsaken.

IMITATION—BK. I., CH. XVI.—OF BEARING THE DEFECTS OF OTHERS.

1. What a man cannot amend in himself or others, he must bear with patience, till God ordains otherwise.

Think that perhaps it is better so for thy trial and patience; without which our merits are of little worth.

Thou must, nevertheless, under such impediments, earnestly pray that God may vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou mayest bear them well.

2. If any one, being once or twice admonished, does not comply, contend not with him; but commit all to God, that His will may be done, and that he may be honoured in all His servants, who knows how to convert evil into good.

Endeavour to be patient in supporting the defects and infirmities of others, of what kind soever; because thou also hast many things which others must bear withal.

If thou canst not make thyself such a one as thou wouldst, how canst thou expect to have another according to thy liking?

We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we mend not our own defects.

3. We would have others strictly corrected, but are not willing to be corrected ourselves.

The large liberty of others displeases us, and yet we would not be denied anything we ask for.

We are willing that others should be bound up by laws, and we suffer not ourselves by any means to be restrained.

Thus it is evident how seldom we weigh our neighbour in the same balance with ourselves.

If all were perfect, what then should we have to suffer from others for God's sake?

4. But now God has so disposed things, that we may learn to bear one another's burdens; for there is no man without defect; no man without his burden; no man sufficient for himself; no man wise enough for himself; but we must support one another, comfort one another, assist, instruct, and admonish one another.

But how great each one's virtue is, best appears in occasions of adversity; for occasions do not make a man frail, but show what he is.

BK. II., CH. III.—OF THE GOOD, PEACEABLE MAN.

1. Keep thyself first in peace, and then thou wilt be able to bring others to peace.

A peaceable man does more good than one that is very learned.

A passionate man turns every good into evil, and easily believes evil.

A good, peaceable man turns all things to good.

He that is in perfect peace suspects no man; but he that is discontented and disturbed, is tossed about with various suspicions; he is neither easy himself, nor does he suffer others to be easy.

He often says that which he should not say, and omits that which it would be better for him to do.

He considers what others are obliged to do, and neglects that to which he himself is obliged.

Have, therefore, a zeal in the first place over thyself, and then thou mayest justly exercise thy zeal towards thy neighbour.

2. Thou knowest well enough how to excuse and colour thy own doings, and thou wilt not take the excuses of others.

It were more just that thou shouldst accuse thyself, and excuse thy brother.

If thou wilt be borne withal, bear also with another.

See how far thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knows not how to be angry with any one, or to have indignation against any one but oneself.

It is no great thing to be able to converse with them that are good and meek, for this is naturally pleasing to all.

And every one would willingly have peace and love those best that agree with them.

But to live peaceably with those that are harsh and perverse, or disorderly, or such as oppose us, is a great grace, and a highly commendable and manly exploit.

3. Some there are who keep themselves in peace, and have peace also with others.

And there are some that are neither at peace within themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace; they are troublesome to others, but always more troublesome to themselves.

And some there are who keep themselves in peace, and study to restore peace to others.

Yet all our peace in this miserable life is rather to be placed in humble suffering, than in not feeling adversities.

He who knows how to suffer will enjoy much peace.

Such a one is conqueror of himself, and lord of the world, a friend of Christ, and an heir of heaven.

BK. III., CH. LVII.—THAT A MAN SHOULD NOT BE TOO MUCH DEJECTED WHEN HE FALLS INTO SOME DEFECTS.

CHRIST. 1. Son, patience and humility in adversity are more pleasing to Me than much consolation

and devotion in prosperity. Why art thou disturbed at a little thing said against thee? If it had been more, thou oughtest not to have been moved.

But now let it pass; it is not the first nor anything new; nor the last, if thou live long.

Thou art valiant enough, so long as no adversity or opposition comes in thy way.

Thou canst also give good advice, and encourage others with thy words; but when any unexpected trouble comes to knock at thy door, then thy counsel and thy courage fail thee.

Consider the great frailty which thou hast often experienced in small difficulties: yet it is intended for thy good, as often as these or such like things befall thee.

2. Put it from thy heart the best thou canst: if it has touched thee, let it not cast thee down nor keep thee long entangled.

At least bear it patiently, if thou canst not receive it with joy.

And though thou be not willing to bear it, and perceive an indignation arising within thyself, yet repress thyself, and suffer no inordinate word to come out of thy mouth, which may scandalize the weak.

This commotion, which is stirred up in thee, will quickly be allayed, and thy inward pain will be sweetened by the return of grace.

I am still living, saith the Lord, ready to help thee and comfort thee more than before, if thou put thy trust in Me, and devoutly call upon Me.

3. Keep thy mind calm and even, and prepare thyself for bearing still more.

All is not lost, if thou feel thyself often afflicted or grievously tempted.

Thou art man, and not God; thou art flesh, and not an angel.

How canst thou think to continue ever in the same state of virtue, when this was not found in the angels in heaven, nor in the first man in paradise?

I am He that raises up and saves them that mourn ; and them that know their own infirmity I advance to my divinity.

DISCIPLE. 4. O Lord ! blessed be this Thy word, it is more sweet to my mouth than honey and the honeycomb.

What should I do in my so great tribulations and anguishes, if Thou didst not encourage me with Thy holy words ?

What matters it how much or what I suffer, if I come at last to the haven of salvation !

Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world : be ever mindful of me, O my God, and direct me by the straight road to Thy kingdom. Amen.

LESSON XXXVI.

That we must Transact Business with Care, but without Anxiety and Solitude. Of Good Government of ourselves in Outward Things, and having Recourse to God in Dangers: Of Prudence in what we do: That a Man must not be too Anxious about his Affairs.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

In carefulness not slothful. In spirit fervent. Serving the Lord.—Rom. xii. 11.

Be nothing solicitous: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God.—Phil. iv. 6.

And that you use your endeavour to be quiet, and that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you: and that you walk honestly towards them that are without: and that you want nothing of any man's.—1 Thess. iv. 11.

Be ye not many masters, my brethren, knowing that you receive the greater judgment. For in many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word; the same is a perfect man. He is able also with a bridle to lead about the whole body.—James iii. 1.

These words teach—1, That tranquillity and diligence must unitedly rule our actions; 2, that we should be on our guard against the tongues of others as well as our own. Hereon both your masters give you practical advice.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. X.—THAT WE MUST
TREAT OF BUSINESS WITH CARE, BUT WITH-
OUT VEXATION AND SOLICITUDE.

1. The care and diligence we ought to have in our affairs are things much different from solicitude, anxiety, and vexation. The angels have care of our salvation, and procure it with diligence, yet they are not solicitous or anxious ; for care and diligence are part of their charity, but solicitude and anxiety would be directly contrary to their felicity ; since care and diligence may be accompanied with tranquillity of mind, but solicitude and anxiety never.

2. Be careful, then, and diligent, *Philothea*, in all the affairs you have in your charge ; for God having entrusted them to you, He would have you take care of them ; but if it be possible be not in vexation and anxiety for them, that is to say, undertake them not with unquietness and solicitude, nor spend yourself about them ; for all kind of violence disturbs the reason and the judgment, and hinders us from doing that well in which we are so earnest.

3. When our Lord reprehended *St. Martha*, He said, *Martha, Martha, thou art solicitous and troublest thyself about many things* (Luke x. 41). Observe, if she had been simply careful, she had not been troubled ; but because she was in anxiety and unquietness, she vexed and troubled herself, and for that our Lord reprehends her. Rivers which glide peaceably through the valleys, bear great boats and rich merchandize ; and the rain, which falls gently in the open fields, makes them fruitful in grass and corn ; but torrents, and rivers which run rapidly, ruin the bordering country, and are unprofitable for traffic, as, likewise, vehement and tempestuous rains lay waste the fields and

meadows. Never was work well done with too much violence and hurry. We must hasten leisurely, says the proverb; *he that hastens too much*, says *Solomon*, *is in danger of stumbling* (Prov. xix. 2) and bruising his feet. We do our business soon enough, when we do it well. Drones make more noise, and are more bustling than bees, but they make only wax and not honey; so they that spend themselves with a tormenting anxiety and fussy solicitude, never do much or well.

4. Flies disquiet us not by their strength but by their number; so great affairs vex us not so much as small ones when they are in great number. Whatsoever businesses befall you, receive them with quietness, and endeavour to despatch them in order, one after another; for if you strive to do all at once, or in disorder, you will overcharge and weaken your spirit, and probably lie down tired under the burden.

5. In all your business rely wholly on God's providence, by which alone your designs must prosper; labour, nevertheless, discreetly on your part to co-operate with it, and then believe that if you trust entirely in God, the result which follows shall be always the most profitable for you, seem it to you good or bad, according to your particular judgment. Do as little children, who with one hand hold fast by their father, and with the other gather strawberries or mulberries along the hedges; so you, gathering and managing the affairs of this world with one hand, with the other hold always fast the hand of your Heavenly Father, turning yourself towards Him from time to time, to see if your employments be pleasing to Him. And take heed, above all things, that you let not go His hand and His protection,

thinking to gather more; for if He forsake you, you will not be able to go a step without falling to the ground. My meaning is, *Philothea*, that amidst your affairs and ordinary business which require not so earnest an attention, you think more on God than on your affairs, and when your affairs are of so great importance that to be well done they require your whole attention, then also from time to time look towards God, as they do that sail on the sea, who to go to the land which they desire look more up to heaven than down on the sea whereon they sail; so will God work with you, in you, and for you, and all your labours shall be accompanied with consolations.

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. XXXVIII.—OF THE GOOD GOVERNMENT OF OURSELVES IN OUTWARD THINGS, AND OF HAVING RECOURSE TO GOD IN DANGERS.

CHRIST.

1. Son, thou must diligently make it thy aim, that in every place, and in every action or outward employment, thou be inwardly free, and master of thyself; and that all things be under thee, and not thou under them.

That thou mayest be lord and ruler of thy actions, not a slave or bondsman.

But rather a freeman, and a true Hebrew, transferred to the lot and to the liberty of the children of God.

Who stand above the things present, and contemplate those that are eternal.

Who look upon passing things with the left eye, and with the right those of heaven.

Who suffer not themselves to be drawn away by temporal things to cleave to them, but rather draw

these things to that end for which they were ordained by God, and appointed by that Sovereign Artist, who has left nothing in all his works but what is regular and orderly.

2. If likewise, in all events, thou rulest not thyself by the outward appearance, nor lookest on the things which thou seest, or hearest with a carnal eye, but presently, on every occasion, dost enter like Moses into the tabernacle to consult the Lord, thou shalt sometimes hear the Divine answer, and come out instructed in many things present and to come.

For Moses always had recourse to the tabernacle, for the deciding of all doubts and questions, and fled to the help of prayer against the dangers and wickedness of men.

So must thou in like manner fly to the closet of thy heart, and there must earnestly implore the divine assistance. For Joshua and the children of Israel (as thou readest, Jos. ix.) were therefore deceived by the Gabaonites; because they did not first consult the Lord, but too easily giving credit to fair words, were deluded with counterfeit piety.

BK. I., CH. IV.—OF PRUDENCE IN WHAT WE DO.

1. We must not be easy in giving credit to every word or suggestion; but carefully and leisurely weigh the matter, according to God.

Alas! such is our weakness, that we often more readily believe and speak of another that which is evil than that which is good.

But perfect men do not easily give credit to every report; because they know man's weakness, which is very prone to evil, and very subject to fail in words.

2. It is great wisdom not to be rash in our doing nor to maintain too obstinately our own opinions.

As also not to believe every man's word, nor presently to tell others the things which we have heard or believed.

Consult with a wise and conscientious man; and seek rather to be instructed by one that is better, than to follow your own inventions.

A good life makes a man wise according to God, and expert in many things. The more humble a man is in himself and more subject to God, the more wise will he be in all things, and the more at peace.

BK. III., CH. XXXIX.—THAT A MAN MUST NOT BE TOO ANXIOUS ABOUT HIS AFFAIRS.

CHRIST. 1. Son, always commit thy cause to Me; I will dispose well of it in due season. Wait for My disposal, and thou shalt find it will be for thy advantage.

DISCIPLE. 2. Lord, I willingly commit all things to Thee; for my care can profit little.

I wish I was not too much set upon future events, but offered myself with all readiness to Thy Divine pleasure.

CHRIST. 3. My son, oftentimes a man eagerly sets about a thing which he desires; but when he has obtained it, he begins to be of another mind. For men's inclinations are not wont to continue long upon the same thing, but rather pass from one thing to another.

It is then a thing not of the least importance, to forsake thyself even in the least thing.

4. A man's true progress consists in denying himself; and the man that has renounced himself is very much at liberty, and very safe.

But the old enemy, who opposes all that is good, fails not to tempt, but by day and night lays his dangerous plots to draw the unwary into his deceitful snares. *Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation* (Matt. xxvi. 41).

LESSON XXXVII.

Of Obedience: Of the Obedience of a Humble Subject after the Example of Jesus Christ: Of Chastity: Advice how to Preserve it: Of Poverty of Spirit.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

And whereas indeed he was the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered: And being consummated, he became, to all that obey him, the cause of eternal salvation.—Heb. v. 8.

Purifying your souls in the obedience of charity, with a brotherly love, from a sincere heart love one another earnestly.—1 Pet. i. 22.

Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.—Luke xii. 35.

For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven.—Matt. xxii. 30.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. v. 3.

Then Jesus said to his disciples: Amen I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. xix. 23.

These words clearly indicate how necessary for all Christians are obedience, chastity, and poverty of spirit; and you will understand from the following instructions of your teachers how you are to practise them.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XI.—OF OBEDIENCE.

1. Charity alone places us in perfection: but obedience, chastity, and poverty are the three great means to attain it. Obedience consecrates our heart, chastity our body, and poverty our goods to the love and service of God. These are three branches of the spiritual cross; all three, however, grounded on the fourth, which is humility. I will say nothing of these three virtues as they are vowed solemnly, for so they concern only religious, nor as they are simply vowed, because though a vow gives always much value and merit to all virtues, yet, for our purpose, it is not necessary they should be vowed, so they be observed. For though being vowed, and especially solemnly, they place a man in the state of perfection, yet to come to perfection itself it suffices that they be observed; for there is a great difference between the state of perfection and perfection itself: since all bishops and religious are in the state of perfection, yet are they not all in perfection, as is but too plainly seen. Let us endeavour, then, *Philothea*, to practise well these three virtues, every one according to his vocation; for though they place us not in the state of perfection, yet they will bring us to perfection; and we are all obliged to practise these three virtues, though not all after one fashion.

2. There are two sorts of obedience, the one necessary, the other voluntary. By the necessary,

you ought humbly to obey your ecclesiastical superiors as the Pope, and the bishop, and the curate, and such as are authorised by them. You ought to obey your civil superiors, as your prince and the magistrates whom he has established over your country; and finally you must obey your domestic superiors, as your father and mother, master and mistress. This obedience is called necessary, because no man can exempt himself from the duty of obeying these superiors, God having placed them in authority to command and govern each of us, according to the charge he has over us. Obey then their commands, that is of necessity; but to be perfect, follow their counsels also, and even their desires and inclinations, so far as charity and discretion will permit you. Obey them when they shall command anything pleasing to you, as to eat, to recreate yourself; for though it seem no great virtue to obey in these cases, yet would it be a great vice to disobey. Obey them in things indifferent, as to wear this or that suit of clothes, to go this way or that, to sing or to be silent, and this will be very commendable obedience. Obey them in hard and unpleasant things, and this will be perfect obedience. Obey, I say, mildly without reply, readily without delay, cheerfully without repining, and above all, obey lovingly for love of Him who for love of us *made Himself obedient even to the death of the Cross* (Phil. ii. 8), and who, as *St. Bernard* says, did choose to lose rather His life than His obedience.

3. That you may learn easily to obey your superiors, condescend easily to your equals, yielding to their opinions in what is not vicious, without contention or harshness; accommodate yourself willingly to the desires of your inferiors so far as reason will

permit, and never exercise any imperious authority over them, so long as they are good. It is an abuse to believe that we would easily obey if we were religious, when we find it difficult to render obedience to such as God hath placed over us.

4. We call that obedience voluntary, whereunto we oblige ourselves by our own election, and which is not imposed upon us by another. We choose not ordinarily our prince, our bishop, our father or mother, nor even in most cases do wives choose their husbands, but we choose our confessor and director. If then in choosing, we make a vow to obey, as did the holy mother *Teresa*, who, as we have said above, besides her obedience solemnly vowed to the superior of her order, bound herself by a simple vow to obey her ghostly father, *Gratian*; or if, without a vow, we dedicate ourselves to the obedience of any one, this obedience is always called voluntary, because of its ground, which depends on our will and choice.

5. We must obey all our superiors, but every one according to the charge he has over us; as in civil and public affairs, we must obey our prince: in ecclesiastical, our prelate: in domestic, our father, husband, master: in the private conduct of the soul, our ghostly father or director.

6. Cause your ghostly father to impose upon you all the actions of piety you ought to perform, for so they will be more excellent and of a double grace and goodness: the one of themselves, because they are good, the other of the obedience by which they are commanded, and in virtue whereof they are performed. Happy are the obedient, for God will never suffer them to go astray.

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. XIII.—OF THE OBEDIENCE
OF A HUMBLE SUBJECT AFTER THE EXAMPLE
OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHRIST.

1. Son, he who strives to withdraw himself from obedience, withdraws himself from grace; and he that seeks to have things for his own particular uses, loses such as are common.

If a man doth not freely and willingly submit himself to his superior, it is a sign that his flesh is not as yet perfectly obedient to him, but oftentimes rebels and murmurs.

Learn, then, to submit thyself readily to thy superior, if thou desirest to subdue thy own flesh.

For the enemy without is sooner overcome if the inward man be not laid waste.

There is no more troublesome or worse enemy to the soul than thou art thyself, when not agreeing well with the spirit.

Thou must in good earnest conceive a true contempt of thyself, if thou wilt prevail over flesh and blood.

Because thou hast yet too inordinate a love for thyself, therefore art thou afraid to resign thyself wholly to the will of others.

2. But what great matter is it, if thou, who art but dust and a mere nothing, submit thyself for God's sake to men, when I, the *Almighty* and the *Most High*, who created all things out of nothing, have, for thy sake, humbly subjected Myself to man!

I became the most humble and most abject of all men, that thou mightest learn to overcome thy pride by My humility.

Learn, O dust, to obey; learn to humble thyself, thou that art but dirt and mire, and to cast thyself down under the feet of all men.

Learn to break thy own will, and to yield thyself up to all subjection.

3. Conceive an indignation against thyself; suffer not the swelling of pride to live in thee; but make thyself so submissive and little, that all may trample on thee, and tread thee under their feet, as the dust of the streets.

What hast thou, vain man, to complain of?

What answer canst thou make, O wretched sinner, to those that reproach thee; thou that hast so often offended God, and many times deserved hell.

But Mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in My sight, that thou mightest know My love, and mightest be always thankful for My favour, and that thou mightest give thyself continually to true subjection and humility and bear with patience to be despised by all.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XII.—ON THE NECESSITY OF CHASTITY.

1. Chastity is the lily of virtues, it makes man almost equal to angels; nothing is beautiful but by purity, and the purity of mortals is chastity. Chastity is called honesty, and the perfection thereof honour: it is named integrity, and the contrary thereof corruption. Briefly, it has a glory all its own, to be the fair white virtue of soul and body. Like the mother of pearl, which can receive no drop of water but such as comes from heaven, the chaste heart can entertain no pleasure but that of marriage, which is ordained from heaven.

2. For the first degree of this virtue, *Philothea*, admit nothing that is prohibited. For the second, retrench as much as possible all that is unprofitable and superfluous, although lawful and permitted. For the third, set not your affections on what is ordained; for, though holy marriage must be used, yet the heart and mind must not be set on the use thereof.

3. Moreover, every one has great need of this virtue. Virgins have need of an extremely simple and prudent chastity, to banish from their hearts all thoughts of curiosity, and to despise with utter contempt all that is degrading. The little moth, seeing the flame, hovers curiously about it, to try whether it be as sweet as it is fair; and, carried away by this fancy, perishes at the very first trial; so these young people oftentimes suffer themselves to be so possessed with the false and foolish idea they have of these pleasures, that after many thoughts of curiosity they at last ruin and lose themselves in the flames; more foolish in this than the moths, for they have some cause to imagine that the fire is sweet because it is beautiful; but these knowing that which they seek to be extremely dishonest, for all that cease not to overestimate a vile and stupid pleasure. Widows have need of a courageous chastity, preserved by an excellent devotion, which, as I have often repeated, is the honey and sugar of the spirit. And for those who are married, though the ordinary run of people cannot conceive it, it is most true that chastity is necessary also for them in their state of life. *St. Catherine of Siena* saw amongst the damned many souls grievously tormented for profaning the sanctity of marriage; which was not for the greatness of the sin, said she, for murders and blasphemies are more enormous, but because they that commit it make no conscience of it, and continue long therein.

4. You see, then, that chastity is necessary for all sorts of people. *Follow peace with all men*, says the Apostle, *and holiness of life, without which none shall see God* (Heb. xii. 14). By *holiness* is here understood chastity, as *St. Jerome* and *St. Chrysostom* agree.

No, *Philothea*, none shall see God without chastity; none shall dwell in His holy tabernacle that are not pure of heart; and our Saviour Himself says, *Dogs and the unchaste shall be banished thence* (Apoc. xxii. 15), and, *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God* (Matt. v. 8).

CH. XIII.—ADVICES HOW TO PRESERVE CHASTITY.

1. Be exceeding diligent in turning away from all occasions and temptations of incontinency; for this vice works insensibly, and from little beginnings advances to great mischiefs, which are always more easy to avoid than to cure.

2. Human bodies are like glasses, which cannot be carried touching one another without danger of breaking, and like fruits which, though never so sound and seasonable, yet by touching one another are impaired. Water itself in a vessel, be it never so fresh, being once touched by any beast of the earth, cannot long retain its freshness. Never suffer any, *Philothea*, to touch you uncivilly, neither in mirth nor love; for though, peradventure, chastity may be preserved in those actions, more light than malicious, yet the freshness and flower of chastity always receives detriment and loss; but to suffer yourself to be touched dishonestly is the utter ruin of chastity.

3. Chastity depends on the heart as her source, yet regards the body as her home. And therefore she may lose herself by all the exterior senses of the body, and by the thoughts and desires of the heart. It is unchaste to behold, to hear, to speak, to touch any dishonest thing, when the heart entertains itself and takes pleasure in it. *St. Paul* says positively, *Let not fornication be so much as once named amongst you* (Ephes. v. 3).

4. The bees will not only not touch carrion, but avoid and hate extremely all unsavoury smells proceeding from it. The sacred Spouse in the Canticles has her hands distilling myrrh, the antidote against corruption ; her lips are bound up with a scarlet ribbon, the mark of modesty in words ; she has the eyes of doves, by reason of their clearness ; she wears golden ear-rings, tokens of purity ; her nose is compared to the cedars of *Libanus*, which are scented and incorruptible wood. Such ought to be the devout soul, chaste, honest, clean in hands, lips, eyes, and all her body.

5. Avoid those who are not modest, principally if they be impudent, as for the most part they are ; for, as goats touching the sweet-almond trees with their tongues make them become bitter, so these corrupted souls and infected hearts scarce speak to any of either sex, but they cause them, in some sort, to fall from modesty ; they have poison in their eyes and in their breath, like basilisks. But, on the contrary, keep company with chaste and virtuous people ; meditate and read often holy things ; for the Word of God is chaste, and makes them chaste that delight in it, which made *David* compare it to the topaz, a precious stone, whose property is to extinguish the fire of concupiscence.

6. Keep yourself always near and close to Jesus Christ crucified, both spiritually by meditation, and really by Holy Communion ; for as they who lie on the herb *Agnus castus* become chaste, so you, resting your heart upon our Saviour, who is the true, chaste, and immaculate Lamb, shall soon find your soul and your heart cleansed from all defilements.

CH. XIV.—OF POVERTY OF SPIRIT TO BE OBSERVED
IN RICHES.

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. v. 3); cursed, then, are the rich in spirit, for the misery of hell is for them. He is rich in spirit who has his riches in his spirit, or his spirit in his riches; he is poor in spirit who has no riches in his spirit, nor his spirit in riches. The halcyons make their nests like an apple, and leave only one little hole in them on the upper side; they place them on the sea-shore, and make them so firm and impenetrable that, the waves surprising them, the water can never get into them, but keeping always above, they remain in the sea, on the sea, and masters of the sea. Your heart, dear *Philothea*, ought to be like that, open only towards heaven, and impenetrable to riches and transitory things. If you have them, keep your heart free from affection to them, let it be always above them; and amongst riches, let it be without riches, and master of riches. No, lodge not this heavenly spirit in earthly goods, let it always be above them, never in them.

2. There is great difference between having poison and being poisoned; almost all apothecaries have poison to use upon divers occasions, yet they are not poisoned, because they have poison not in their bodies but in their shops. So you may have riches without being poisoned with them, if you keep them in your purse, or in your house, and not in your heart. To be rich in effect and poor in affection, is the greatest happiness of a Christian. For he has by that means the commodity of riches for this world, and the merit of poverty for the world to come.

3. Alas! *Philothea*, no man will confess himself

covetous ; every one disavows that baseness and vileness of heart ; for excuse they plead the great charge of children, which oppresses them, or prudence, which requires that men should make sure of a settled income ; they never have too much ; and some necessities are always found out as reasons to get more. Even the most covetous, far from confessing himself to be such, does not think in his conscience that he is so ; for covetousness is a monstrous fever, which becomes so much the more insensible by how much more violent and burning it is. *Moses* saw that holy fire which burned in the bush, yet consumed it not ; but this profane fire of avarice consumes and devours the covetous person, and yet burns not at all ; at least, in the midst of his heats and burnings, he boasteth of the coolest freshness in the world, and esteems his insatiable drought to be a natural and pleasing thirst.

4. If you desire long, ardently, and solicitously the riches which you have not, it is useless to say that you would not have them unjustly. You do not cease to be truly covetous for all that. He who desires earnestly, constantly, and impatiently to drink, albeit he would drink water only, yet proves that he has a fever.

5. O *Philothea* ! I know not whether it be a just desire, to covet to have justly that which another justly possesses ; for it seems that by this desire we would profit ourselves by the damage of others. He that justly possesses anything, has he not more reason to keep it justly than we to desire it justly ? and why then extend we our desire to his possession, to deprive him of it ? If this desire be just, yet certainly it is not charitable, for we would not in any case that another man should desire, although justly, that which

we would justly keep. This was the sin of *Achab*, who desired to have *Naboth's* vineyard justly, which *Naboth* much more justly desired to keep. *Achab* desired it ardently for a long time, and impatiently, and therefore offended God.

6. Stay, dear *Philothea*, from desiring your neighbour's goods till he desires to part with them ; for then his desire will render yours not only just, but charitable also. Yes, I am willing you should take care to augment your substance, so it be done not only justly, but leisurely and charitably.

7. If you affect much the goods which you have, if you be troubled much about them, setting your heart and thoughts upon them, and fearing, with a vexing and impatient fear, to lose them, believe me, you have still some kind of fever ; for, they who have fevers drink the water that is given them, with a certain haste, with a certain pleasure and greediness, which the healthy have not. It is impossible to take great pleasure in anything, without greatly setting our affection upon it.

8. If you suffer loss of goods, and find your heart disconsolate and afflicted thereat, reckon, *Philothea*, that you bear much affection to them ; for nothing so much witnesses to the affection for what we have lost as affliction for the loss.

9. Desire not, then, with a full and express desire, the wealth you have not, nor settle your heart very much on what you have ; discomfort not yourself for the losses which befall you, and then you shall have reason to say, and believe, that being rich in effect you are not so in affection ; but that you are poor in spirit, and consequently blessed ; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to you.

CH XV.—HOW TO PRACTISE TRUE AND REAL POVERTY, BEING, NOTWITHSTANDING, REALLY RICH.

1. The painter *Parrhasius* painted the people of *Athens* by a most witty invention, representing their divers and variable dispositions, choleric, unjust, inconstant, covetous, gentle, merciful, high-minded, proud, humble, hardy, and cowardly, and all this together. But I, dear *Philothea*, would put into your heart riches and poverty together, a great care and a great contempt of temporal things.

2. Take much more care to make your temporal goods profitable and fruitful than worldly men do. Tell me, are not the gardeners of great princes more curious and diligent to deck and trim up the gardens they have in charge than if they were their own? And why? Because doubtless they consider those gardens as kings' and princes' gardens, to whom they desire to make themselves acceptable by those services. *Philothea*, the possessions we have are not ours; God has given them to us to manage, and His will is that we render them profitable and fruitful; and therefore we do Him good service to take care of them. But, it must be a care greater and more solid than worldlings have of their riches; for their labours are but for love of themselves, and ours must be for the love of God.

3. Now as self-love is violent, turbulent, and impatient, so the care we take for it is full of vexation, anguish, and unquietness; and as the love of God is sweet, peaceable, and quiet, so the care which proceeds from it, although it be for worldly goods, is amiable, sweet, and pleasant. Let us, then, have this gentle care of preserving, yea, and of increasing our temporal goods, whensoever any just occasion shall present itself, and as far as our condition requires

it; for God will have us to do so for the love of Him.

4. But take heed that self-love deceive you not; for sometimes it counterfeits so craftily the love of God that you would say it were the same. Now, that it may not deceive you, and that this care of your temporal goods may not turn into avarice, beside what I said in the former chapter, we must very often practise a true, real and effectual poverty in the midst of all the riches and wealth that God has given us.

5. Always, then, relinquish some part of your goods, bestowing them upon the poor with a willing heart; for, to give away what we have is to impoverish ourselves by so much as we give; and the more we give, the poorer we make ourselves. True it is that God will repay it again, not only in the next world, but even this, for nothing so much prospers our temporal estate as alms. But till such time as God shall restore it, we remain poorer by what we have given. O how holy and rich is that poverty which is caused by alms!

6. Love the poor and poverty; for so shall you become truly poor, since, as the Scripture says, We are made like the things which we love. Love makes lovers equals. *Who is weak*, saith *St. Paul*, *with whom I am not weak?* (2 Cor. xi. 29). He might have said likewise: Who is poor, with whom I am not poor? for love made him like to those whom he loved. If, then, you love the poor, you shall be truly a partaker of their poverty, and poor like them. Now, if you love the poor, be often among them, be glad to see them in your own house, visit them in theirs, converse willingly with them, rejoice that they come near you in the churches, in the

streets, and elsewhere. Be poor in tongue with them, discoursing with them as their companion, but be rich in hand, giving them liberally of your goods, as having more abundance.

7. Will you yet go farther, my *Philothea*? Content not yourself to be poor as the poor, but be poorer than the poor themselves. And how may that be? The servant is less than his master, be you, then, a servant of the poor; go and serve them in their beds when they are sick; I say, serve them with your own hands, be yourself their cook, and at your own expense. Be their sempstress and laundress. O *Philothea*! this service is more glorious than a kingdom.

8. I cannot sufficiently admire the ardent affection with which this counsel was put in practise by *St. Louis*, one of the greatest kings the sun ever saw, greatest in all kinds of greatness. He served often at table the poor whom he nourished, and caused three poor men, almost every day, to come to his own table, and many times did eat the remainder of their pottage with an incomparable love. When he visited the hospitals of the sick, which he did very often, he served those ordinarily who had the most loathsome diseases, the leprous, ulcerous, and such like, and performed all this service to them bareheaded, and kneeling on the ground, respecting in their persons the Saviour of the world, and cherishing them with as tender a love as any careful mother could do her own child.

9. *St. Elizabeth*, daughter to the king of Hungary, often put herself amongst the poor, and for her recreation sometimes clothed herself like a poor woman, amongst her ladies, saying to them: If I were poor, thus would I attire myself. O good God,

Philothea, how poor were this prince and this princess in their riches, and how rich in their poverty. Blessed are they that are poor in this sort, for to them belongs the kingdom of heaven. *I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat: I was naked, and you clothed Me: possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Matt. xxv. 35), the King of the poor and of kings will say at His general judgment.

10. There is none but upon one occasion or other finds want of some conveniency; sometimes comes a guest to our house, whom we should and would entertain very well, but for the present we are not prepared to receive him; sometimes our best clothes are in one place, when we want them in another; it happens, another time, that all the wine in our cellar works and turns, so that there remain only gross and green wines; another time, we come to some poor village, where all things are wanting; there is neither bed-chamber, table, nor attendance. In fine, it is very ordinary to want something, be we never so rich. Now this is to be poor in effect—when we want these things. *Philothea*, be glad of such occasions; accept them with all your heart, and suffer them cheerfully.

11. When accidents happen which impoverish you, either much or little, as tempest, fire, inundations, dearth, thieves, suits of law, oh, then, indeed, is the time to practise poverty, receiving these losses with mildness, and bearing patiently and constantly this poverty. *Esau* presented himself to his father with his hands all hairy, and *Jacob* did the same; but because the hair that covered *Jacob's* hands stuck not to his skin but to his gloves, one might take away the hair without hurting him; while because the hair of *Esau's* hands grew on his own skin, being hairy by nature,

he that should have endeavoured to pull off his hair should have put him to great torment—he would have cried aloud, and been earnest in his defence. When our riches cleave to our hearts,—if a tempest, if thieves, if contentious persons pull away any of them from us, what complaints, what troubles, what impatience presently have we! But when our riches are held only with the care God would have us take, and do not cleave to our hearts—if they be taken from us, we lose neither senses nor quietness. This is the difference between beasts and men, as to their garments; for the garments of beasts stick fast to their flesh, and those of men are only cast about them, so that they may be put on and off at pleasure.

CH. XVI.—HOW TO PRACTISE RICHNESS OF SPIRIT IN REAL POVERTY.

1. But if you are really poor, *Philothea*, for God's sake be so likewise in spirit, make a virtue of necessity, and value this precious jewel of poverty at the high rate it deserves. The lustre thereof is not discovered in this world, and yet, nevertheless, it is exceeding rich and beautiful.

2. Be patient, you are in good company; our Saviour, our Lady, the Apostles, so many Saints, both men and women, have been poor, and though they had means to be rich, yet they refused to be so. How many rich worldlings with incomparable care and great contradictions have gone to seek holy poverty in cloisters and hospitals? Witness *St. Alexis*, *St. Paula*, *St. Paulinus*, *St. Angela*, and so many others; and behold, *Philothea*, this holy poverty, more favourable to you, comes to present herself in your own house; you have found her without seeking, without pain; embrace

her, then, as a dear friend of Jesus Christ, who was born, who lived, and died in poverty; she was His nurse all His life.

3. Your poverty, *Philothea*, has two great privileges, by virtue of which she can make you rich in merit. The first is, that she came not to you by your own choice, but only by the will of God, who made you poor without any concurrence of your own will. Now, that which we receive purely from the will of God is ever most acceptable to Him, provided that we receive it cheerfully, and for the love of His holy will; where there is least of our own, there is most of God's; the simple and pure acceptance of God's will makes the purest patience.

4. The second privilege of this poverty is, that it is a poverty truly poor. A poverty that is commended, cherished, esteemed, succoured, and assisted, is not altogether poor, having something of riches in it; but a poverty which is despised, rejected, reproached, and abandoned, is truly poor. Such is ordinarily the poverty of secular men. Because they are not poor by their own choice, but by necessity, they are not much esteemed; and, in that they are not esteemed, their poverty is poorer than that of religious men; although otherwise the poverty of religious men has a very great excellency, and is much more commendable by reason of the vow, and the intention for which it is chosen.

5. Complain not, then, my dear *Philothea*, of your poverty; for we complain not but of that which displeases us; and if poverty displease you, you are no more poor in spirit, but rich in affection.

6. Be not discomfited then that you are not so well succoured as it is requisite; for in this consists

the excellency of poverty. To have a desire to be poor, and not to receive the inconvenience of it, is too great an ambition, for it is to desire the honour of poverty and the commodity of riches.

7. Be not ashamed to be poor, or to ask alms in charity. Receive with humility what shall be given you, and take denials meekly. Remember often the voyage Our Lady made into *Egypt* to carry thither her dear Child, and how much contempt, poverty, and misery she was forced to suffer. If you live thus you shall be most rich in your poverty.

LESSON XXXVIII.

Of Friendship: Of True and False Friendships: Of Guarding against too much Intimacy: That Peace is not to be Placed in Men.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you.—Luke vi. 28.

Owe no man anything, but to love one another. For he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law.—Rom. xiii. 8.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.—Ephes. v. 1.

You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.—John xiv. 28.

Now when he was at Jerusalem at the pasch, upon the festival day, many believed in his name, seeing the signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men.—John ii. 23.

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their charge.—2 Tim. iv. 16.

In these words you have—1, A description of what true Christian friendship is, and how it should be

well-ordered, lest your own interest might be more thought of than your neighbour's good and the glory of God; 2, a warning not to place too much confidence in men, even though they are your friends, nor to commit yourself to their imprudence or inconstancy; 3, an example in *St. Paul's* case, how, when they are most needed, friends fail. Now heed well the teachings of both your masters on this subject.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XVII.—OF FRIENDSHIP;
AND FIRST OF WICKED AND FRIVOLOUS
FRIENDSHIP.

1. Love has the first place among the passions of the soul. It is the king of all the motions of the heart; it changes all the others into itself, and makes us altogether such as the thing we love. Take heed, then, O *Philothea*, that you have no evil love, for with it you will become presently evil. Now, of all love friendship is the most dangerous, because other love may be without communication, but friendship being wholly grounded upon that, we can hardly have it with any person without partaking of his qualities.

2. All love is not friendship, for one may love and not be loved, and then is there love but not friendship; because friendship is a mutual love, and if the love be not mutual it is not friendship. Nor is it enough that it be mutual, but the parties that love one another must know their mutual affection, for if they know it not, it will be love, but not friendship. There must be also some kind of communication between them, which is the ground of friendship. According to the diversity of communication, friendship also is diverse, and communications are different, according to the difference of the matters communi-

cated. If they be wicked and vain, the friendship is also false and vain; if they be virtuous, the friendship is true; and the more excellent the matters communicated are, the more excellent is the friendship. For as that honey is best which is gathered from the blossoms of the sweetest and most excellent flowers, so that love is the most excellent which is founded upon the most excellent communication. And as there is honey in *Heraclea*, a province in *Pontus*, which is venomous, and makes them mad that eat it, because it is gathered from the venomous herb aconite, which abounds in that country; even so, friendship grounded upon the communication of wicked and vicious things is altogether false and wicked. So also is that which is founded on vain and frivolous virtues, because these virtues depend only on the senses. I call frivolous virtues certain abilities and vain qualities which weak spirits call virtues and perfections. Observe the greater part of maids, women, and young people, they will not stick to say: Such a gentleman is very well qualified, and has many perfections; he dances well, he plays well at all games, he dresses well, he sings well, he discourses well, he is good-looking. Thus mountebanks esteem him most accomplished among them that plays the fool best.

3. But as all these things depend on the senses, so the friendships which proceed from them are termed sensual, vain, and frivolous, and deserve rather the name of fondness than friendship; such are ordinarily the friendships of young people, which are built on a fair curled lock of hair, smiling glances, good clothes, affected countenances, and idle discourse—friendship suitable to the age of those whose virtue

is yet in the blossom, and their judgment in the bud ; and indeed such amities are but transitory, and melt away like snow in the sun.

CH. XIX.—OF TRUE FRIENDSHIPS.

1. Love greatly every one, *Philothea*, with a charitable love ; but have no friendship save with those that can communicate with you virtuous things ; and the more exquisite the virtues are which shall be interchanged, the more precious will be the friendship. If this communication be in learning, the friendship will be very commendable, still more if it be in virtues, in prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. But, if your commerce be in charity, devotion, and Christian perfection, oh how precious will this friendship be ! It will be excellent, because it comes from God ; excellent, because it tends to God ; excellent, because its very knot is God ; excellent, because it shall last eternally in God. O how good it is to love on earth as they love in heaven, to learn to cherish one another in this world, as we shall do eternally in the next !

2. I speak not here of the simple love of charity, for that must be borne towards all men, but of spiritual friendship, by which two or three or many souls communicate their devotion, their spiritual affections, and make one good spirit among themselves. Such happy souls may justly sing, *Behold how good a thing it is, and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together* (Ps. cxxxii. 1). Yes, for the delicious balm of devotion distils from one heart to the other by continual participation, insomuch that it may be said God has poured out upon this friendship His blessing and life everlasting. Methinks all other friendships are but shadows in comparison of this ;

their bonds are but chains of glass or jet, in comparison of this great bond of holy devotion, which is all of gold.

3. · Make no other kind of friendship than this; I speak of the friendships which you make, for you must not forsake or neglect the friendships which nature and existing duties oblige you to cultivate towards your parents, kindred, benefactors, neighbours, and others; I speak of those which you choose yourself.

4. Many, peradventure, will tell you that we should have no kind of particular friendship or affection, because it distracts the mind, possesses the heart, and begets envy; but they are deceived in their advice; for they have seen in the writings of many devout authors that particular friendships and excessive affections infinitely prejudice Religious: they imagine that it is so with the rest of the world; but on this there is much to say. For, since that in a well-ordered monastery the common design of all tends to true devotion, it is not requisite to make these particular communications there, lest, seeking in particular that which is common, they fall from particularities to partialities. But for those who live in the world and embrace virtue, it is necessary to unite themselves together by a holy friendship; for by means thereof they encourage, help, and lead on one another to goodness. And as they that go on plain ground need not be led by the hand, but they who go in rugged and slippery ways hold one by the other to walk more securely, so they that are in Religion have no need of particular friendships, but they who are in the world have need of them, to succour and secure one another amongst so many

dangerous passages which they are to pass. In the world, all conspire not to the same end, all are not of one mind; we must then doubtless separate ourselves, and make friendships according to our pretensions. This particularity makes indeed a partiality; yet 'tis a holy partiality, which makes no division but only between good and evil, sheep and goats, bees and drones, a separation most necessary.

5. No man can deny but our Blessed Saviour loved with a more tender and particular friendship *St. John, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary Magdalen*: for the Scripture testifies it. We know that *St. Peter* tenderly loved *St. Mark* and *St. Petronilla*; as *St. Paul* his *Timothy* and *St. Thecla*; *St. Gregory Nazianzen* boasts a hundred times of the incomparable friendship he had with the great *St. Basil*, and describes it in this manner: *It seemed that in the one and the other of us there was but one soul, dwelling in two bodies; and if those are not to be credited who said that all things are in all things, yet must we believe that we were both in each one of us, and one within the other. We had both of us the same pretensions to advance in virtue, and to apply all the designs of our life to future hopes, going in this manner out of this mortal world before we died in it.*

6. *St. Augustine* testifies that *St. Ambrose* loved *St. Monica* entirely for the rare virtues he observed in her, and that she reciprocally revered him as an angel of God. But I am to blame to hold you so long in a matter so clear. *St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Bernard*, and all the greatest servants of God had most particular amities, without any prejudice to their perfection. *St. Paul* reproaches the ill behaviour of the *Gentiles*, accusing them that they were people *without affection*, that is to say, who

had no true friendship. And *St. Thomas*, with all other good philosophers, confesses that friendship is a virtue. And he speaks of particular friendship, since, as he says, perfect friendship cannot be extended to many persons. Perfection, then, consists not in having no friendship, but in having none but such as is good, virtuous, and holy.

CHS. XX. AND XXI.—THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE AND VAIN FRIENDSHIP.

1. But observe now this principal admonition, my *Philothea*. The honey of *Heraclea*, which is so venomous, is like the other, which is so wholesome; there is great danger in taking the one for the other, or in mingling them together, for the goodness of the one would not hinder the poison of the other. He must stand upon his guard that will not be deceived in these friendships, principally when they are contracted between persons of divers sexes, under what pretence soever, for the devil often brings a change to those who love. They begin in virtuous love, but if they are not very discreet, fond love will first mingle itself, then sensual, and afterwards wicked. Yea, there is danger even in spiritual love, if we are not very watchful, though in this it be more difficult to make a change, because the purity and candour of this love renders more apparent the faults which Satan endeavours to mingle with it; and therefore, when he undertakes this, he does it more craftily, and endeavours to slip in his poison almost insensibly.

2. You may discern worldly friendship from that which is holy and virtuous, as the *Heracleian* honey is known from other honey. The honey of *Heraclea* is

sweeter to the taste than the ordinary honey, because of the juice of the aconite, which gives it an additional sweetness; so worldly amity produces ordinarily a confused rabble of honied words, flattering phrases, rapturous admirations of beauty, behaviour, and other personal qualities; but holy friendship speaks simply and frankly, and can commend nothing but virtue and the grace of God, the only foundation on which it subsists.

3. The honey of *Heraclea*, being swallowed, causes a dizziness in the head; and false friendship breeds a giddiness, which leads to those familiarities and uncivil kindnesses which are certain signs of the approaching ruin of honesty. While holy friendship has no eyes but sincere and chaste; no caresses but pure and modest; no sighs but for heaven; no familiarities but spiritual; no complaints but when God is not loved—infallible tokens of virtue. The honey of *Heraclea* troubles the sight, and this worldly friendship blinds the judgment, so that they who are infected with it think they do well when they do ill, and believe their excuses and pretexts to be true reasons: they fear the light, and love darkness. But holy friendship has a clear sight, and never hides herself, but appears willingly before honest persons. In fine, the honey of *Heraclea* leaves a bitterness in the mouth; so false friendships change and terminate in utter wickedness, or else in injuries, slanders, deceits, melancholy confusions and jealousies, and at last, even in madness. But holy friendship is always equally honest, civil, amiable, and never changes but into a more perfect union of spirits, a lively image of the blessed friendship exercised in heaven.

4. Young people who use glances, signs, and

courtings, or speak words which they would not have heard by their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, or confessors, sufficiently witness thereby that they treat of some other thing than honour and conscience. Our Blessed Lady was troubled when she saw an angel in the shape of a man, because she was alone, and that he gave her extraordinary, though heavenly praises. O Saviour of the world! purity fears an angel in the shape of a man, and why should not impurity fear a man though he comes in the shape of an angel, when he praises her with human and sensual commendation?

CH. XXII.—OTHER ADVICES ON THE SUBJECT OF FRIENDSHIP.

1. Friendship requires great communication between friends, otherwise it will neither grow nor continue. Wherefore, it often happens, that with this communication of friendship other communications insensibly glide from one heart to another, by a mutual infusion and intercourse of affections, inclinations, and impressions. But this happens especially when we highly esteem him whom we love, for then we open our heart in such sort to his friendship that with it his inclination and impressions easily enter in full stream, be they good or bad. Certainly the bees that gather the honey of *Heraclea* seek nothing but honey, yet with the honey they insensibly suck the venomous quality of the aconite from which they gather it. Well, then, *Philothea*, in this case, you must put in practice the words which the Saviour of our souls was wont to speak, as the ancients have taught us. Be good treasurers or exchangers of money; that is to say, receive not false money with

the good, nor base gold with fine; separate the dross from the precious; yes, for there is scarce any but has some imperfection. And what reason is there to receive promiscuously the tares and imperfections of a friend with his friendship? we must love him indeed, notwithstanding his imperfections, but we must neither love nor receive his imperfections; for friendship requires communication of good and not of evil. Wherefore, as they that draw gravel out of the river *Tagus* separate the gold which they find, to carry it away, and leave the sand on the shore; so they who have the communication of some good friendship ought to separate from it the sand of imperfections, and not permit it to enter into the soul. *St. Gregory Nazianzen* witnesses that many, loving and admiring *St. Basil*, were ambitious to imitate him even in his outward imperfections, as in speaking slowly, distractedly, and pensively, in the fashion of his beard and in his gait. And we see likewise, husbands, wives, children, and friends, who, having great estimation of their friends, parents, husbands, and wives, get, either by compliance or imitation, a thousand little ill humours in their communication of friendship which they have one with another. Now this ought not to be done in any sort, for every one has evil inclinations enough of his own, without charging himself with those of others, and friendship is so far from requiring this, that on the contrary, it obliges mutually to endeavour the freeing of one another from all kind of imperfections. We must, indeed, meekly bear with the imperfections of our friends; but we must not lead them into imperfections, much less transfer their imperfections to ourselves. But I speak only of imperfections; for, as for sins,

we must neither cause nor suffer them in our friends.

2. It is either a weak or false friendship to see our friend perish, and not to help him; to see him die of an imposture, and not to dare to open it with the lancet of correction to save his life. True and lively amity cannot subsist where sin is. They say the salamander puts out the fire in which she lies; and so sin destroys that friendship wherein it lodges. If it be a light passing sin, friendship will presently banish it by correction; but if it be a lasting sin, then friendship soon perishes, for it cannot subsist but upon true virtue; how much less then ought we to sin for friendship's sake. A friend is an enemy when he would induce us to sin, and merits to lose the friendship when he would destroy and damn the friend. Nay, it is one of the most assured marks of false friendship, to see it kept with a vicious person, in what sort of sin soever he be. If he whom we love be vicious, without doubt our friendship is vicious; for, where it cannot meet with true virtue, it must needs be grounded on some frivolous virtue or sensuality. Society, made for temporal profit among merchants, has but a shadow of true friendship, for it is not made for the love of the persons, but for the love of gain.

3. These two Divine sentences are two sure pillars to secure a Christian life; the one of the Wise Man: *He that feareth God shall likewise have a good friendship* (Ecclus. vi. 17). The other, of the Apostle *St. James*: *The friendship of this world is contrary to God* (James iv. 4).

IMITATION—BK. I., CH. VIII.—OF GUARDING AGAINST
TOO MUCH INTIMACY.

Discover not thy heart to every one (Eccles. viii. 22); but treat of thy affairs with a man that is wise and feareth God.

Keep not much company with young people and strangers.

Be not a flatterer with the rich, nor willingly appear before the great.

Associate thyself with the humble and simple, with the devout and virtuous; and treat of those things which may be to edification.

Be not familiar with any women; but recommend all good women in general to God.

Desire to be familiar only with God and his angels; and fly the acquaintance of man.

We must have charity for all, but familiarity is not expedient.

It sometimes happens that a person when not known, shines by a good reputation; who, when he is present, is disagreeable to them that see him.

We think sometimes to please others by being with them; and we begin rather to disgust them by the evil behaviour which they discover in us.

BK. III., CH. XLII.—THAT PEACE IS NOT TO BE
PLACED IN MEN.

CHRIST.

1. Son, if thou placest thy peace in any person for the sake of thy contentment in his company, thou shalt be unsettled and entangled.

But if thou hast recourse to the everlasting and subsisting Truth, thou shalt not be grieved when a friend departs or dies.

In *Me* the love of thy friend must stand; and for *Me* he is to be loved, whoever he be that appears to thee good, and is very dear to thee in this life.

Without *Me* no friendship is of any strength, nor will it be durable; nor is that love true and pure of which I am not the author.

Thou oughtest, indeed, to be so far dead to such affections of persons beloved, as to wish, as far as appertains to thee, to be without any company of man.

By so much the more does a man draw nigh to God, by how much the further he withdraws himself from all earthly comfort.

So much the higher also he ascends into God, by how much the lower he descends into himself, and by how much the meaner he esteems himself.

2. But he that attributes anything of good to himself stops the grace of God from coming into him; for the grace of the Holy Ghost ever seeks an humble heart.

If thou couldst perfectly annihilate thyself, and cast out from thee all created love, abundance of grace would flow into thee.

When thou lookest towards creatures, the sight of the Creator is withdrawn from thee.

Learn, for the Creator's sake, to overcome thyself in all things; and then thou shalt be able to attain to the knowledge of God.

How little soever it be, if a thing be inordinately loved and regarded, it keeps thee back from the Sovereign Good, and corrupts the soul.

LESSON XXXIX.

Of the Exercise of Exterior Mortification: Of Company and Solitariness: Of Decency in Attire: Of Discourse: How to speak of God: Of Civility in Talk: Of Avoiding Superfluity of Words.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.—1 Cor. ix. 27.

Do not still drink water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy frequent infirmities.—1 Tim. v. 23.

But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.—Phil. iii. 20.

Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt: that you may know how you ought to answer to every man.—Col. iv. 6.

Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth: but that which is good to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God: whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.—Ephes. iv. 29.

But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.—Matt. xii. 36.

These words tell you—1, Of the necessity of leading a mortified life, which withholds superfluities from

the body, but discreetly, and according to the capabilities and strength of each; 2, of what kind should be the conversation of Christians, how they should watch their words, and refrain from idle talk. Both your teachers have something to say on this matter.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XXIII.—OF THE
EXERCISE OF EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION.

1. They who treat of husbandry and farming tell us, that if one write any word upon a very sound almond, and put it again into the shell, shutting it up very close, and so plant it, all the fruit which that tree produces will have the same word written and engraved upon it. For my part, *Philothea*, I could never approve of their order and method, who, to reform a man, begin with the exterior, as the gestures, apparel, and hair. On the contrary, I think it better to begin with the interior. *Be converted unto me* (Joel ii. 12), saith God, *with all your heart. Son, give me thy heart* (Prov. xxiii. 26). For the heart being the fountain of all our actions, they must needs be such as is the heart. The Divine Spouse inviting the soul: *Place me*, says He, *upon thy heart as a signet; upon thy arm* (Cant. viii. 6). Yes, for whosoever has *Jesus Christ* in his heart will quickly have Him in all his exterior actions. For this cause, dear *Philothea*, I have desired, above all things, to engrave and write in your heart this sacred word **LIVE JESUS**, assuring myself that afterwards your life, which has its beginning from the heart, as an almond tree from its kernel, will bring forth all her actions, which are her fruits, engraven subscribed with that same word of salvation. And as this sweet *Jesus* will live in your heart, so will He also live in all your conversation, and will appear in your eyes, in your

mouth, in your hands, and even in your hair; and you will be then able to say with *St. Paul*: *I live now not I, but Christ lives in me* (Gal. ii. 20). Briefly, he that has gained the heart of a man has gained the whole man. But even this heart, by which we should begin, requires to be instructed how it should frame its outward course and conversation, to the end men may not only see holy devotion there, but great wisdom also, and discretion; for this I will briefly give you some advices.

2. If you are able to endure fasting, you will do well to fast some days besides those which the Holy Church enjoins; for besides the ordinary effects of fasting, which are to elevate the spirit, subdue the flesh, practise virtue, and gain greater recompense in heaven, it is a sovereign benefit to keep yourself in an ability to master gluttony, and subject the sensual appetite and the body to the law of the spirit: and although we fast not much, yet the enemy fears us more when he sees we know how to fast. *Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays*, are the days in which the early Christians exercised most abstinence; take, therefore, some of them to fast on, as much as your devotion and the discretion of your ghostly director shall advise you.

3. I would willingly say, as *St. Jerome* said to the devout lady *Læta*: *Long and immoderate fastings do much displease me, especially in those that are yet tender in years*. I have learned by experience that the little ass, being weary in his journey, seeks to go out of the way, that is to say, young people, being brought to infirmity through excess of fastings, easily take to self-indulgence. The deer run ill in two seasons, when they are too fat and when they are too lean. We are

most subject to temptations when our body is too much pampered and when it is too much weakened ; for the one makes it insolent with comfort, and the other desperate with discomfort, and as we cannot bear it when it is too fat, so can it not bear us when it is too lean. The want of this moderation in fasting, in disciplining, in hair-clothes, and other austerities, make the best years of many unprofitable in the service of charity ; as it did even in *St. Bernard*, who repented that he had used over much austerity. They who the more unreasonably have afflicted their bodies in their beginning, the more have been constrained in the end to favour them. Had they not done better to have mortified their bodies moderately, and proportionably to the offices and labours whereunto their conditions obliged them ?

4. Both fasting and labour mortify and subdue the flesh ; but if the labour you shall do be necessary, or very profitable to the glory of God, I had rather you would suffer the pain of labour than that of fasting. This is the sense of the Holy Church, which, for labours that are profitable to the service of God and our neighbour, discharges such labourers even from the fasts commanded. It is a pain to some to fast, to others to serve the sick, to visit prisoners, to hear confessions, to assist the afflicted, to preach, pray, and perform such like exercises. These latter pains are better than the former, for besides that they equally subdue the body, they produce fruits much more profitable ; and therefore, generally, it is better to preserve the bodily forces more than is requisite, than to weaken them too much ; for we may always abate them when we will, but we cannot always repair them when we would.

5. Methinks we should greatly reverence the words

which our Blessed Saviour says to His disciples: *Eat that which shall be set before you* (Luke x. 8). It is, in my opinion, a greater virtue to eat without choice that which is set before you than to choose always the worst; for although this latter course of life seems more austere, the other, notwithstanding, has greater resignation; for thereby we renounce not only our own taste, but also our own choice, and it is not a small severity to conform our taste to every meat, and to keep it in subjection to all encounters. Besides, this kind of mortification makes no show, nor troubles any man, and is only proper for a civil life. To put by one meat and take another, to taste and pick at every dish, to think nothing well dressed, to make a mystery at every morsel, betokens a heart too effeminate, and too much addicted to dishes and platters. I esteem more *St. Bernard's* drinking oil instead of water and wine, than if he had drunk wormwood on purpose; for it was a plain sign that he thought not on what he drank. And in this carelessness of what we eat or drink consists the perfect performance of this sacred rule, *Eat that which shall be set before you*. I except, notwithstanding, such meats as prejudice our health or trouble the spirit, as hot, spiced, fuming and unwholesome meats: and likewise certain occasions in which nature has need to be recreated and strengthened to support some labours for God's glory. A continual and moderate sobriety is better than violent abstinences made by fits and mingled with many intermissions.

6. Disciplining has a marvellous efficacy to stir up a desire of devotion in us, when it is moderately used. The hair-shirt mortifies the flesh very much; but the ordinary use thereof is neither for married persons, nor

tender complexions, nor for such as are employed in painful labours. It is true that upon some principal days of penance it may be used, with advice of a discreet confessor.

7. We must take the night to sleep in, every one as much as his constitution requires, to enable him to wake in the day, and to spend it profitably. And because the Holy Scripture, in an hundred kinds, gives us the example of the Saints, and natural reasons do seriously recommend the morning to us as the best and most fruitful part of the day, and that our Saviour Himself is named the Sun-rising, and our Blessed Lady the Dawning of the day, I think it is a virtuous care to go to rest betimes at night, that we may wake and rise early in the morning; for certainly that time is the most quiet and least perplexed. The very birds do then invite us to wake and praise God, so that early rising advantages both our health and piety.

8. *Balaam* mounted on his ass went to find *Balac*, but because he had no good intention, the angel waited for him in the way, with a sword in his hand to kill him. The ass that saw the angel stood still three sundry times as restive; *Balaam*, in the meantime, beat her cruelly with his staff to make her go forward, until the silly beast, the third time falling flat down under *Balaam*, miraculously spake to him, saying: *What have I done to thee for which thou hast beaten me now three several times?* (Num. xxii. 28). And by and by *Balaam's* eyes were opened and he saw the angel, who said to him, *Wherefore didst thou beat thy ass? if she had not turned back from before me, I had killed thee and saved her.* Then *Balaam* said to the angel, *Lord, I have sinned, for I knew not that Thou*

hadst placed Thyself in the way against me. Seest thou, *Philothea*? *Balaam* is the cause of the evil, and he strikes and beats his poor ass that could not do otherwise. It is just so with us, for this woman sees her husband or her child sick, and presently she runs to fasting, to hair-cloth, disciplining, as *David* did in the like case. Alas! my dear friend, you beat the poor ass, you afflict your body, but it cannot help your affliction, nor divert God's sword drawn against you. Correct your heart which is an idolator of this husband, and suffers a thousand vices in this child, and destines it to pride, vanity, and ambition. This man perceives that he often falls shamefully into the sin of luxury; inward remorse comes against his conscience with a sword in its hand to pierce it with a holy fear; suddenly his heart coming to itself, says, *Ah! cursed flesh! Ah! treacherous body, thou hast betrayed me!* and presently he takes revenge on his flesh with immoderate fasting, excessive disciplining, insupportable hair-clothes. O poor soul, if your flesh could speak as *Balaam's* ass did, she would say to you: *Wherefore, miserable man, dost thou strike me?* It is against thyself, O my soul, that God arms His vengeance, it is thou that art guilty! wherefore dost thou lead me to wicked conversation? why dost thou employ mine eyes, my lips, my hands, in wickedness? wherefore dost thou busy me with wrong imaginations? Have thou good thoughts, and I shall have no evil feelings; frequent thou virtuous persons, and I shall not be disquieted by concupiscence. Alas! it is thou that throwest me into the fire, and yet thou wouldst have me not burn; thou puttest smoke into mine eyes, and forbiddest them to be distempered. And God, doubtless, on

these occasions, says : Beat, break, tear, and shiver your hearts principally, for it is against them that My anger is stirred up. Certainly, to cure the itch it is not so needful to wash or bathe the body, as to purify the blood and refresh the liver ; so, to cure us of our vices, it is good indeed to mortify the flesh, but it is more necessary perfectly to purify our affections and refresh our hearts. But in, and above all, let us be sure never to undertake corporal austerities except with the advice of our spiritual guide.

CH. XXIV.—OF COMPANY AND SOLITARINESS.

1. To seek company, and fly it, are two extremes to be blamed in the devotion of people in the world, which is that whereof I discourse. To shun all companies savours of disdain and contempt of our neighbour, and to seek after them is a sign of idleness. We must love our neighbour as ourselves, and to show that we love him we must not avoid his company, and to testify that we love ourselves we must take pleasure with ourselves, when we are in ourselves; and we are in ourselves when we are alone. *Think first of thyself*, says *St. Bernard*, and then of others. If, then, no occasion press you to go abroad, or to receive company at home, stay in yourself and converse with your own heart ; but if company come to you, or any just cause invite you to company, go in God's name, *Philothea*, and see your neighbour with a cheerful heart and a cheerful face.

2. We call that evil company which is assembled to some evil intent, or when it is composed of indiscreet and dissolute persons ; and such we must avoid as the bees use to shun a swarm of wasps or drones. For as they that are bitten by mad dogs have their

sweat, breath, and spittle infectious, especially for children and those of a tender complexion, so vicious and lawless persons cannot be frequented but with hazard and danger, and especially by those whose devotion is yet but young and tender.

3. There are some conversations profitable for nothing but only recreation, which are made merely to divert us from serious affairs; for such, though we must not be too much addicted to them, yet we may spare them the leisure set apart for recreation. Other conversations have civility for their end, as mutual visits, and certain meetings made to do honour to our neighbour; touching these, we ought neither to be superstitious in the use of them, nor uncivil in contemning them, but modestly comply with our duties therein, to the end we may equally avoid both incivility and vanity.

4. There remain now the profitable conversations, such as those of devout and virtuous persons. O *Philothea*, it will be good for you to be often in these. The vine planted amongst the olive trees bears oily grapes which taste of olives, and the soul which frequents virtuous people cannot but partake of their qualities. Drones alone cannot make honey, but by the help of the bees they make it. We are much advantaged in the exercise of devotion by conversing with devout persons.

5. In all conversations sincerity, simplicity, mildness, and modesty are still to be preferred. There are some that make no gesture or motion but with so much affectation that they offend the company; and as he that would never walk but telling his steps, nor speak but singing, would be troublesome to other men, so they who affect an artificial carriage, and do

not hing but in measure, are impertinent to the company, and in these there is ever some kind of presumption. Let a moderate mirth ordinarily predominate in your conversation. *St. Romauld* and *St. Anthony* are highly commended that notwithstanding all their austerities, they had always mirth, cheerfulness, and civility in their countenances and discourse. *Rejoice with them that rejoice* (Rom. xii. 15). I say once again with the Apostle, *Rejoice always, but in our Lord; let your modesty appear to all men* (Phil. iv. 4). To rejoice in our Saviour, it is needful the cause of your joy be not only lawful, but also seemly; and this I say because there are some things lawful, but yet are not seemly. And to the end your modesty may appear, keep yourself from all insolency, which is always reprehensible. To give one a fall, to black another's face, to prick or pinch a third, to hurt a madman, are foolish and insolent merriment.

6. But ever, besides mental solitude, whereto you may withdraw yourself even amidst the greatest conversations, as I have already declared, you must love to be really and locally solitary; not to go to the desert or wilderness, as *St. Mary of Egypt*, *St. Paul*, *St. Anthony*, *Arsenius*, and the other Fathers of the Desert; but to be sometimes in your garden, or in your chamber, or in some other place where you may with most contentment retire your spirit into your heart, and recreate your soul with good thoughts and holy meditations, or by some good reading, according to the example of the great Bishop *Nazianzen*, who, speaking of himself, says: *I walked myself with myself about sunseting, and passed the time upon the sea-shore, for I was wont to use this recreation to refresh myself, and to shake off a little my ordinary troubles, and there-*

upon he discourses of the good meditation which I mentioned in another place. And according to the example of *St. Ambrose*, of whom *St. Augustine* says, that entering oftentimes into his chamber, for entrance was denied to no man, he saw him reading, and having stayed awhile for fear of troubling him, he went away without speaking a word, thinking that the little time that remained to this great pastor for reinforcing and recreating his spirit after the toils of so many businesses, ought not to be taken from him. So, after the Apostles one day had told our Lord how they had preached and laboured: *Come*, says He, *into the desert, and repose yourselves for awhile* (Mark vi. 31).

CH. XXV.—OF DECENCY IN ATTIRE.

1. *St. Paul* admonishes devout women, and the same must be understood of men, to be attired in decent apparel, adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety. Now the decency of apparel and other ornaments depends on their stuff, fashion, and cleanliness. Touching cleanliness, it should be almost always alike in our apparel, on which, as near as may be, we should not permit any kind of spots or foulness. Exterior neatness represents in some sort the inward; and God Himself requires corporal decency in those that approach near His altar, and have the principal charge of devotion.

2. As for the stuff and fashion of clothes, decency is to be considered according to the divers circumstances of time, age, quality, company, and occasions. Men apparel themselves ordinarily better on festival days, according to the solemnity of the feast which is celebrated. In time of penance, as in Lent, rich clothes are laid aside; at weddings they put on wed-

ding garments; at burials, mourning; at court, men are better clad than at home. The married woman may, and ought to adorn herself when her husband is present and desires it; but if she do so in his absence, she will be asked whose eyes she desires to favour with that particular respect. We give more liberty of dressing to young maids, because they may lawfully desire to please many, although with no other intent than to gain one by holy marriage. Neither is it esteemed amiss that widows who pretend to marriage dress themselves well, so they show no lightness; for having already been mothers of families, and passed through the griefs of widowhood, they are held to be of a more settled judgment. But as for those which are true widows, not only in body but in heart, no ornament becomes them but humility, modesty, and devotion. For, if they desire to make men in love with them, they are not true widows, and if they desire it not, why do they use the instrument? He that will not receive guests must pull down the sign from his house. Old people are always ridiculous when they try to deck themselves out; these follies are not tolerable but in youth.

3. Be neat, *Philothea*, let nothing be about you loose or ill put on; it is a neglect of them with whom we converse to come into their company in uncomely apparel. But take heed withal of affectation, curiosities, effeminacies, and vanities. As far as you are able, keep yourself always in simplicity and modesty; for without doubt it is the greatest ornament of beauty, and the best palliation of ugliness.

4. *St. Peter* admonished young women especially, not to wear their hair so curled and crisped in rings and wreaths, but men who are so effeminate as to

affect such vanities are justly despised. And even women, carried away with those vanities, are counted but weak in virtue; at least, if they have any, it appears not among so many toys and levities. They say they intend no ill in these things, but I reply, as I have elsewhere said, that yet the devil does. For my part, I would have my devout man's and my devout woman's apparel the best of all the company's, but yet the least pompous and affected; and as is said in the proverb, I would have them adorned with gravity, decency, and honour. *St. Louis* says, in one word, that we ought to dress according to our state, so that good and grave may not say, You do too much, nor young persons, You do too little. But if young people will not content themselves with what is becoming, we must abide by the judgment of the wise.

CH. XXVI.—OF DISCOURSE, AND FIRST HOW TO SPEAK OF GOD.

1. Physicians gain great knowledge of the health or sickness of a man by looking at his tongue; so our words are certain signs of the quality of our souls. *By thy words*, says our Saviour, *thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned* (Matt. xii. 37). Our hand soon presses on the pain we feel, and our tongue soon expresses the love we feel.

2. If then, *Philothea*, you love God, you will often speak of Him in your familiar discourses with your household, friends, and neighbours. *For the mouth of the just will meditate wisdom, and his tongue will speak judgment* (Ps. xxxvi. 30). As bees have nothing in their little mouths but honey, so shall your tongue be always sweetened with God, and shall find no greater

pleasure than to send through your lips the praises and blessings of His Name; for, so they say, *St. Francis* was wont to suck and lick his lips after he had pronounced the holy Name of our Lord, as if drawing thence the greatest sweetness in the world.

3. But speak always of God as of God, that is, reverently and devoutly; not with a purpose to seem learned or sufficient, but with a spirit of mildness, charity, and humility; distilling as much as you may, as it is said of the Spouse in the *Canticles*, the delicious honey of devotion and holy things, drop by drop, into the ears sometimes of one, sometimes of another, praying to God in the secret of your heart that it would please Him to make this heavenly dew pass into the hearts of those that hear you.

4. Above all things perform this angelical office mildly and sweetly, not by way of correction, but of inspiration. For it is wonderful how powerfully a sweet and gentle manner of proposing good things works on the hearts of the hearers.

5. Never, therefore, speak of God and of devotion by way of discourse and entertainment, but with attention and reverence; which I say to make you beware of a notable vanity that is found in many who make profession of devotion; they will, upon every occasion, utter holy and zealous discourses by way of compliment, without considering what they do, and after they have spoken them they imagine themselves to be such as their words declare them, which indeed they are not.

CH. XXVII.—OF CIVILITY IN TALK, AND DUE RESPECT OF PERSONS.

1. *If any one offend not in word, says St. James, he*

is a perfect man (James iii. 2). Beware you utter not any unseemly word, for although it proceed not from you with an ill intention, yet they that hear it may interpret it otherwise. A bad word falling into a weak heart spreads itself like a drop of oil falling on a piece of linen, and sometimes it so seizes on the heart, that it fills it with a thousand bad thoughts and temptations. For as the poison of the body enters by the mouth, so the poison of the heart enters by the ear, and the tongue which utters it is a murderer. For although, peradventure, the poison which it has cast forth has not wrought its effect, because it found the hearts of the hearers prevented with some preservative, yet there wanted no malice in the tongue to commit the murder. And let no man say that he thought no evil, for our Lord, who knows all thoughts, has said *that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh* (Luke vi. 45). And though we think no evil, yet the devil thinks enough, and often secretly makes use of these wicked words to wound some heart. They say such as have eaten the herb angelica have always a sweet and pleasant breath, and they that have honesty and purity, which is an angelical virtue, in their hearts, have their words always pure, civil, and chaste. As for *foolish talking and scurrility* (Ephes. v. 4), the Apostle will not once have them named among us, assuring us, *that nothing so much corrupteth good manners as wicked discourse* (1 Cor. xv. 33).

2. If uncivil words be uttered obscurely with wit and subtlety, then are they far more venomous; for as a dart the sharper it is the more easily it entereth into the body, so the more sharp a wicked word is the more it pierces the heart. And they that esteem them-

selves gallant men for speaking such words in company, know not indeed wherefore conversation is ordained ; for they should be like swarms of bees gathered together to make honey of some pleasant and virtuous entertainment, and not like a nest of wasps who come together to suck corruption. If some fool speaks improper words to you let him know that your ears are offended with it, either by turning yourself away, or by some other means, as your discretion shall guide you. It is one of the worst conditions a wit can have, to be a mocker ; God extremely hates this vice, and has heretofore made strange punishments thereof. Nothing is so contrary to charity, and much more to devotion, as the despising and contemning of our neighbour. Now, derision and mockery is never without this contempt, and therefore it is a very great sin, so that the doctors have reason to say that mockery is the greatest offence man can commit against his neighbour by words ; for other offences are committed always with esteem of him that is offended, but this is done with scorn and contempt.

3. As for jesting words, which are spoken by one to another with modest and innocent mirth, they belong to the virtue called *Eutrapelia* by the *Greeks*, which we may call *good conversation*, by which we take an honest and pleasant recreation on such frivolous occasions as human imperfections offer ; only we must take heed of passing from this honest mirth to scoffing, for mocking causes laughter in scorn and contempt of our neighbour ; but mirth and drollery provoke laughter by an innocent liberty, confidence, and familiar freedom joined to the wittiness of some conceit.

4. *St. Louis*, when religious persons would speak

with him after meals of great and weighty matters, used to say : *It is not now a time to quote texts, but to recreate our spirits with mirth and pleasant conceits ; let every man say decently what he will.* This he said in behalf of the nobility that were then about him to receive favour from his majesty. But, *Philothea*, let us pass the time of recreation in such sort that we keep holy eternity ours by devotion.

IMITATION—BK. I., CH. X.—OF AVOIDING SUPERFLUITY OF WORDS.

1. Fly the tumult of men as much as thou canst, for treating of worldly affairs hinders very much, although they be discoursed of with a simple intention.

For we are quickly defiled and ensnared with vanity.

I could wish I had often been silent, and that I had not been in company.

But why are we so willing to talk and discourse with one another, since we seldom return to silence without prejudice to our conscience?

The reason we are so willing to talk is, because by discoursing together we seek comfort from one another, and would gladly ease the heart, wearied by various thoughts.

And we very willingly talk and think of such things as we most love and desire, or which we imagine contrary to us.

2. But, alas ! it is often in vain and to no purpose ; for this outward consolation is no small hindrance of interior and divine comfort.

Therefore we must watch and pray, that our time may not pass away without fruit.

If it be lawful and expedient to speak, speak those things which may edify.

A bad custom, and the neglect of our spiritual advancement, is a great cause of our keeping so little guard upon our mouth.

But devout conferences concerning spiritual things help very much to spiritual progress; especially where persons of the same mind and spirit are associated together in God.

LESSON XL.

Of Rash Judgment : Of Detraction : Of Avoiding
Rash Judgment : Of Self-Consideration : Of
Avoiding Curiosity about Others.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not : and he that eateth not, let him not judge him that eateth. For God hath taken him to him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? To his own lord he standeth or falleth. And he shall stand ; for God is able to make him stand.—Rom. xiv. 3.

And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye ? Or how sayest thou to thy brother, Let me cast the mote out of thy eye ; and behold a beam is in thy own eye ? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.—Matt. vii. 3.

Therefore everyone of us shall render account to God for himself. Let us not therefore judge one another any more. But judge this rather, that you put not a stumbling-block or a scandal in your brother's way.—Rom. xiv.

12.

Detract not one another, my brethren. He that detracteth his brother, or he that judgeth his brother, detracteth the law, and judgeth the law. But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.
—James iv. 11.

These words clearly show how much rash judgment and detraction displease God; and how we should curb our curiosity about others, and rather attend to ourself and our own miseries. Practical rules are given to you by both your masters.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XXVIII.—OF RASH JUDGMENT.

1. *Judge not and you shall not be judged*, says the Saviour of our souls, *condemn not and you shall not be condemned* (Matt. vii. 1). *No*, says the holy Apostle, *Judge not, before the time, until our Lord do come who will reveal the secrets of darkness, and lay open the counsels of hearts* (1 Cor. iv. 5). O how displeasing are rash judgments to God! The judgments of the children of men are rash, because they are not judges of one another, and in judging they usurp to themselves our Lord's office. They are rash, because the principal malice of sin depends on the intention and counsel of the heart, which is a secret of darkness to us. They are rash, because every one has enough to do to judge himself, without presuming to judge his neighbour. To keep ourselves from being judged, it is equally necessary to judge ourselves and not to judge others. For as our Blessed Lord forbids us the one, so His Apostle enjoins us the other, saying: *If we judged ourselves we should not be judged* (1 Cor. xi. 31). But we do the clear contrary; for what is forbidden us we cease not to do, judging our neighbour on every occasion, and what is commanded us, which is to judge ourselves, we never put in practice.

2. We must use remedies against rash judgments, according to their causes. There are some hearts harsh, bitter, and virulent by nature, which make also

bitter whatsoever they receive, converting *judgment*, as the prophet says, *into wormwood, never judging their neighbour but with rigour and bitterness* (Amos v. 7). These have great need to fall into the hands of some good spiritual physician; for this bitterness of heart being natural to them is hard to overcome, and though in itself it be no sin, but only an imperfection, yet is it dangerous, because it introduces and causes to reign in the soul rash judgment and detraction. Some judge rashly, not in bitterness, but in pride, imagining that by how much they diminish other men's honour by so much they increase their own—arrogant and presumptuous spirits who admire themselves, and place themselves so high in their own estimation that they look on everything else as base and abject. *I am not as other men*, said the foolish Pharisee. Others have not this manifest pride, but take only a certain little satisfaction to consider other men's evil, the better and more contentedly to favour the contrary good wherewith they think themselves endowed. And this complaisance is so secret, and so hard to be perceived, that without a good sight it cannot be discovered, and they themselves that are touched with it cannot know it until it be shown them. Others, to flatter and excuse themselves towards themselves, and to mitigate the remorse of their own consciences, very willingly judge other men faulty in the same vice to which they find themselves addicted, or some other as great, believing that the multitudes of offenders make sins less blamable. Many accustom themselves to judge rashly, only for the pleasure they take to discourse, and make conjectures of other men's manners and humours, by way of exercising their wits. And if by

mischance they happen upon truth in their judgment, boldness, and a desire to continue in this folly so much increase, that they are hardly diverted from it. Others judge in passion, thinking always well of what they love, and always ill of what they hate, saving in one only case, very marvellous, yet true, wherein excess of love provokes them to make an ill judgment of that which they love : a monstrous effect, but proceeding always from a faulty, infirm, troubled, and imperfect love, and this is jealousy, which as every man knows, on a mere look, on the least smile in the world, condemns the party beloved of disloyalty and unfaithfulness. In fine, fear, ambition, and other such infirmities of the mind, ordinarily contribute towards the breeding of suspicious and rash judgments.

3. But what remedy ? They who drink the juice of the herb in *Ethiopia* called ophiusa, imagine that they see themselves environed with horrible serpents and dreadful things. They who have swallowed down pride, envy, ambition, and hatred, think all things they see faulty and blamable. Those to be healed must drink of wine made of palms, and these must drink as much as they can of the sacred wine of charity, to purge them of these humours which cause them to make such perverse judgments. Charity is afraid to meet evil, so far is she from seeking after it ; when she meets it, she turns away her face, and seems not to see it ; nay, at the first noise of evil she shuts her eyes that she may not see it, and afterwards believes with a holy innocency that it was not evil but only the shadow or ghost of evil, and if she be forced to acknowledge it to be evil, she instantly turns away from it, and endeavours to forget the form

thereof. Charity is the sovereign remedy against all evil, but especially against this.

4. All things seem yellow to those that are sick of the jaundice, and they say that to cure them they must wear celandine under the soles of their feet. The sin of rash judgment is a spiritual jaundice, and makes all things appear faulty to their eyes who are infected therewith; he that will be cured of it must apply the remedies not to his eyes, nor to his understanding, but to his affections, which are the feet of the soul. If your affections are mild, such will your judgment be, if charitable, your judgment will also be charitable. I present you with three examples. *Isaac* had said that *Rebecca* was his sister; *Abimelech* saw him playing with her, that is, making very much of her, and presently he judged she was his wife; a malicious eye would rather have judged her to have been far otherwise, but *Abimelech* followed the most charitable opinion he could gather from such conduct. We must always do the like, *Philothea*, in favour of our neighbour so much as is possible. And if one action could have a hundred faces, we should always look on the fairest. Our Blessed Lady was with child, and *St. Joseph* plainly perceived it; but because on the other side he saw her pure, holy, and angelical, he could not believe anything contrary to her sanctity; so that he resolved in forsaking her secretly to leave the judgment of it to God; and though the argument was strong to make him conceive an ill opinion of the Blessed Virgin, yet would he never judge her by it. And why? *Because*, says the Spirit of God, *he was just*. A just man when he can no longer excuse either the action, or the intention of him whom otherwise he

knows to be an honest man, still refuses to judge, puts the remembrance of it out of his mind, and leaves the judgment to God. Our Blessed Saviour on the Cross, though He could not altogether excuse the sin of them that crucified Him, yet did He diminish the malice of it, alleging their ignorance. When we cannot excuse the sin, let us at least render it worthy of our compassion, attributing it to the most tolerable cause we may, as ignorance or infirmity.

5. But may we never then judge our neighbour? No, verily, never. It is God that judges malefactors in public justice. It is true that He uses the voice of magistrates to make Himself understood by us. They are His interpreters, and ought to pronounce nothing but what they have learned of Him, as being His oracles; if they do otherwise, following their own passions, then it is they indeed that judge, and consequently they shall be judged; for men are forbidden, as they are men, to judge others.

6. To see and know a thing is not to judge it, for judgment, at least according to the Scripture phrase, presupposes some little or great, true or apparent controversy to be ended; wherefore it says, that *they who believe not are already judged* (John iii. 18), because there is no doubt of their damnation. It is not then ill done to doubt of our neighbour; no, for we are not forbidden to doubt but to judge; yet ought we neither to doubt nor suspect but precisely so far as reasons and arguments constrain us, otherwise even doubts and suspicions are rash.

7. If some evil eye had seen *Jacob* kiss *Rachel* by the well, or *Rebecca* receive earrings and bracelets from *Eliezer*, a man unknown in that country, he would no doubt have thought ill of these two patterns

of chastity, but without reason and ground; for when an action is of itself indifferent, it is rash suspicion to draw an ill consequence from it unless many circumstances give force to the argument. It is also a rash judgment to draw an argument from the action to blame the person. But of this we shall speak more clearly by and by.

8. In fine, those that take care of their consciences are not very subject to rash judgments; for as bees seeing mists or cloudy weather retire to their hives to mind their honey, so the thoughts of good people never wander abroad on doubtful objects, or amongst the obscure actions of their neighbours; but to avoid such occasions they retire themselves into the closet of their hearts, there to see to the good resolutions of of their own amendment.

9. It is the part of an unprofitable soul to busy herself in examining other men's lives. I except such as have charge of others, as well in commonwealth as in private families; for a great part of their conscience consists in watching diligently over that of others. Let them then do their duty with love, and that done, let them keep themselves within themselves in this particular.

CH. XXIX.—OF DETRACTION.

1. Rash judgment breeds disquiet, contempt of our neighbour, pride, self-conceit, and a hundred other most pernicious effects, amongst which detraction has the first place as the true plague of conversation. O that I had one of the burning coals off the holy altar to touch the lips of men, to the end their iniquities might be abolished, and their sin cleansed, in imitation of the seraphim that purified the mouth

of the prophet Isaias! He that could deliver the world from detraction would free it from a great part of the sins of iniquity.

2. Whosoever takes unjustly from his neighbour his good name, besides the sin he commits, is bound to make reparation, though differently, according to the diversity of the slanders; for no man can enter into heaven with other men's goods, and amongst all exterior goods a good name is the most precious. Slander is a kind of murder, for we have three lives—the spiritual, which consists in the grace of God; the corporal, which is in the soul; and the civil, which consists in our good name. Sin deprives us of the first, death of the second, and detraction of the third. But a slanderer, by one blow of his tongue, commits ordinarily three murders; he kills his own soul, and his that hears him by a spiritual homicide, and takes away the civil life from him whom he slanders; for as *St. Bernard* says, he that detracts, and he that hearkens to the detractor, both of them have the devil about them; for the one hath him in his tongue, and the other in his ear. *They have whet their tongues like serpents* (Ps. cxxxix. 4), says *David*, speaking of detractors. Now the serpent's tongue is forked, as *Aristotle* says, and so is that of a detractor, who at once stings and poisons the ears of the hearer, and the reputation of him whom he slanders.

3. I conjure you then, most dear *Philothea*, that you never speak ill of any man directly or indirectly. Take heed of imposing false crimes and sins on your neighbour; never discover his secret sins, nor aggravate those that are manifest; never make evil interpretation of his good works; never deny the the goodness which you know to be in him, nor

dissemble it maliciously, nor diminish it by words, for in all this you will highly offend God ; but most of all by false accusation and denying the truth to the prejudice of your neighbour, for it is a double sin to lie and to prejudice your neighbour both at once.

4. They that to speak ill of another make prefaces of honour, or mingle their discourse with facetious conceits, are the most dangerous and venomous detractors of all. I protest, say they, I love him, and in other things he is a gallant man, but yet the truth must be told, he did ill to commit such a treachery. She is a very virtuous maid ; but she was surprised ; and such like flourishes. Seest thou not this sleight of theirs ? He that would shoot with a bow draws the arrow as near to himself as he can, but it is only to shoot it away with greater force. These detractors seem to draw their slanders towards themselves, but it is only to shoot them away with the greater force, that they may pierce deeper into the hearts of the hearers.

5. Detraction uttered by way of jesting is the most cruel of all ; for as hemlock is not of itself a very violent but a gentle poison, and easily remedied, yet being taken with wine it is remediless ; so detraction, which of itself would pass lightly in at one ear and out at the other, sticks fast in the memory of the hearers when it is couched in some subtle and merry jest. *They have, says David, the venom of asps under their lips* (Ps. xiii. 3). The stinging of the asp is scarce to be felt, and his venom at first breeds a delightful itching, by means of which the bowels and heart open themselves and receive the poison, against which afterwards there is no remedy.

6. Say not such a one is a drunkard, although you have seen him drunk ; for one only act gives not the

name to a thing. The sun stood still once in favour of Josue's victory, and was darkened another time in favour of that of our Saviour ; yet none will say that the sun is immovable, or dark. *Noe* was once drunk, and *Lot* another time; yet neither the one nor the other were drunkards. Nor was *St. Peter* a blood-shedder for having once shed blood ; nor a blasphemer though he once blasphemed. To bear the name of a vice or virtue, it is necessary to make a progress and gain a habit therein. It is an imposture to say one is choleric because we have seen him once angry, or a thief because he hath once stolen. Although a man have been a long time vicious, yet we incur a danger of lying by calling him a vicious person. *Simon* the leper called *Mary Magdalen* a sinner, because she had been so not long before ; yet he lied for she was then no more a sinner, but a most holy penitent, and therefore our Saviour took her cause into His protection. The foolish pharisee held the publican for a great sinner, peradventure for an unjust man, an adulterer or extortioner, but he was much deceived, for at that very time he was justified.

7. Alas ! since the goodness of God is so great that one moment suffices to obtain and receive His grace, what assurance can we have that he who was yesterday a sinner is so to-day ? The day past ought not to judge the day present, nor the present that which is past ; there is but the last which judges all. We can, then, never say a man is wicked, without danger of lying. That which we may say, in case we must speak, is, that he did such an ill act, he lived ill such a time, he doth ill for the present ; but we may draw no consequences from yesterday to this day, nor from this day to yesterday, much less to-morrow.

8. Now though we must be extremely wary never to speak ill of our neighbour, yet must we take heed of an extremity into which some fall, who to avoid slander commend and speak well of vice. If you find a person be indeed a slanderer, say not to excuse him, that he is a free and liberal speaker; nor say of a notorious vain man, that he is genteel and neat; of dangerous familiarities, say not they are mere harmless follies; dissemble not disobedience with the name of zeal; nor arrogancies with the name of freedom, nor wantonness with the title of friendship. No, dear *Philothea*, thinking to avoid the sin of slandering, we must not favour, flatter, or cherish other vices, but roundly and freely speak of evil, and blame that which is blamable; for in this we glorify God, so that we observe these conditions following.

9. To reprehend safely another man's faults, it is necessary that the advantage of him of whom we speak, or of them to whom we speak, require it. I discourse before maidens of the indiscreet familiarities of such and such which are manifestly dangerous, the extravagances of this or that person in speeches or gestures which are plainly unbecoming. If I reprehend not freely this evil, but rather excuse it, these tender souls who hear me will take occasion to let themselves loose to some such mischief. Their profit then requires that I freely reprehend things at the instant, unless I may discreetly reserve this good office to a better opportunity when I may less prejudice those of whom I speak.

10. Moreover it is requisite that it belongs to me to speak on this subject, as when I am of the chief of the company, and that if I speak not it would seem that I approve of the vice; for if I be one of the

least then I must not undertake to censure. But above all it is necessary that I be exactly just in my discourse, and not say one word too much. For example, if I blame the familiarity of this young man and that young maid, because it is too indiscreet and dangerous, *Philothea*, I must hold the balance so even as not to make the fault heavier, no not one grain; if there be but only a weak appearance, I will say no more; if but a mere indiscretion, I will give it no worse name; if neither indiscretion nor probable appearance of evil, but that some malicious spirit may have from thence taken occasion to speak ill, I say so, or nothing at all. My tongue, while I judge my neighbour, is in my mouth like a razor in the hand of a surgeon that would cut between the sinews and the muscles. The blow I give must be so just that I say neither more nor less than the exact truth. In fine, it must be our principal care in blaming vice, to spare as much as may be the person in whom it is.

11. It is true that of infamous, public and notorious sinners we may speak freely, so that it be with the spirit of charity and compassion, and not in arrogancy and presumption, nor to please ourselves in the misfortunes of others, which latter is always the part of a poor and abject heart. I except always the declared enemies of God and His Church; for those we must disparage as much as we can, as all sects of heretics, schismatics, and their leaders: it is charity to cry against the wolf when he is among the sheep, yea, wherever he is.

12. Every one takes the liberty to censure princes, and speak ill of whole nations, according to the diversity of affections that men bear them. *Philothea*,

128 LESSON XL. OF AVOIDING RASH JUDGMENT.

commit not this fault; for besides the offence to God, it may raise you up a thousand sorts of quarrels.

13. When you hear any detraction, make the accusation doubtful if you can do it justly; if not, excuse the intention of the party censured; if that cannot be done, show compassion towards his frailty, divert the discourse, remembering, and putting your hearers in mind that they who offend not owe all the thanks of it to God. Recall the detractor to himself by some mild way, and speak some good of the party slandered, if you know any.

IMITATION—BK. I., CH. XIV.—OF AVOIDING RASH JUDGMENT.

1. Turn thy eyes back upon thyself, and see thou judge not the doings of others.

In judging others, a man labours in vain, often errs, and easily sins; but in judging and in looking into himself, he always labours with fruit.

We frequently judge of a thing according as we have it at heart; for we easily lose true judgment through private affection.

If God were always the only object of our desire, we should not so easily be disturbed at the resistance of our opinions.

2. But there is often something lying hid within, or occurring from without, which draws us along with it.

Many secretly seek themselves in what they do, and are not sensible of it.

They seem also to continue in good peace when things are done according to their will and judgment; but if it fall out contrary to their desires, they are soon moved and become sad.

Difference of thoughts and opinions is too frequently the source of dissensions amongst religious and devout persons.

3. An old custom is with difficulty relinquished; and no man is led willingly further than he himself sees or likes.

If thou reliest more upon thine own reason or industry than upon the virtue that subjects to Jesus Christ, thou wilt seldom and hardly be an *enlightened man*; for God will have us perfectly subject to himself and to transcend all reason by inflamed love.

BK. II., CH. V.—OF SELF-CONSIDERATION.

1. We cannot trust much to ourselves, because we often want grace and understanding.

There is but little light in us, and this we quickly lose through negligence.

Many times also we perceive not that we are so blind interiorly.

We often do ill, and do worse in excusing it.

We are sometimes moved with passion, and we mistake it for zeal.

We blame little things in others, and pass over great things in ourselves.

We are quick enough at perceiving and weighing what we suffer from others, but we mind not what others suffer from us.

He that would well and duly weigh his own deeds, would have no room to judge hardly of others.

2. An internal man prefers the care of himself before all other cares; and he that diligently attends to himself, is easily silent with regard to others.

Thou wilt never be internal and devout unless thou pass over in silence other men's concerns, and particularly look to thyself.

If thou attend wholly to thyself, and to God, thou wilt be little moved with what thou perceivest without thee.

Where art thou when thou art not present to thyself?

And when thou hast run over all things, what profit will it be to thee if thou hast neglected thyself?

If thou desirest to have peace and true union, thou must set all the rest aside, and turn thy eyes upon thyself alone.

3. Thou wilt then make great progress, if thou keep thyself free from all temporal care.

But if thou set a value upon anything temporal, thou wilt fail exceedingly.

Let nothing be great in thy eyes, nothing high, nothing pleasant, nothing agreeable to thee, except it be purely God, or of God.

Look upon as vain all the comfort which thou meetest with from any creature.

A soul that loveth God despiseth all things that are less than God.

None but God, eternal and incomprehensible, who fills all things, can afford true comfort to the soul and true joy to the heart.

BK. III., CH. XXIV.—OF AVOIDING CURIOUS INQUIRY RESPECTING THE LIFE OF OTHERS.

1. Son, be not curious, and give not way to useless cares.

What is this or that to thee? Do thou follow Me.

For what is it to thee whether this man be such or such; or that man do or say this or the other?

Thou art not to answer for others, but must give an account for thyself: why, therefore, dost thou meddle with them?

Behold, I know every one, and I see all things that are done under the sun; and I know how it is with every one, what he thinks, what he would have, and at what his intention aims.

All things, therefore, are to be committed to Me; but, for thy part, keep thyself in good peace, and let the busybody be as busy as he will.

Whatsoever he shall do or say will come upon himself, because he cannot deceive Me.

2. Be not solicitous for the shadow of a great name; neither seek to be familiarly acquainted with many, nor to be particularly loved by men.

For these things beget distractions and great darkness in the heart.

I would willingly speak My words to thee, and reveal My secrets to thee, if thou wouldst diligently observe My coming, and open to Me the door of thy heart.

Be careful and watch in prayers, and humble thyself in all things.

LESSON XLI.

Other Advices touching Discourse: Of Avoiding Disputes: That we should not Believe all, and how easily we Err in Speech: Of having Confidence in God when Arrows of Words are aimed against us.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

If any man speak, let him speak as words of God.—
1 Pet. iv. 11.

*For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek after peace, and pursue it.—*1 Pet. iii. 10.

*But if you have bitter zeal, and there be contentions in your hearts, glory not, and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom, descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and contention is, there is inconstancy, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation. And the fruit of justice is sown in peace, to them that make peace.—*James iii. 14.

*For every nature of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of the rest is tamed and hath been tamed by the nature of man. But the tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison.—*James iii. 7.

Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me,

they will also persecute you : if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also.—John xv. 20.

These words teach—1, That rules of wisdom and prudence must be observed in discourse; 2, that contentions must be avoided; 3, that faults are easily committed; 4, that the sharp shafts of words should be borne patiently, after the example of Christ. Hereon each of your masters has practical advice for you.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XXX.—OTHER ADVICES
TOUCHING DISCOURSE.

1. Let your language be courteous, sincere, plain, innocent, and faithful; take heed of dissimulation and deceit; for though it is not always good to tell all sorts of truth, yet it is never lawful to oppose the truth. Never accustom yourself to lie wittingly, neither by way of excuse nor otherwise, remembering always that God is the God of truth. If you tell a lie unawares, and can correct it at the instant, either by some explication or reparation, fail not to do it; a true excuse has much more grace and force than a lie.

2. Though a man may sometimes prudently and discreetly disguise and cover a truth by some sleight of discourse, yet must that not be used but in matters of importance, when the glory and service of God manifestly requires it. In any other case such craft is dangerous, for as the Holy Scripture saith, *The Holy Ghost dwells not in a dissembling and double spirit* (Wis. i. 5). No cunning is so good as plain dealing. Worldly wisdom and carnal craft belong to the children of this world, but the children of God walk uprightly, and their heart is free from guile. *He that*

walketh innocently, says the Wise Man, *walketh confidently* (Prov. x. 9). Lying, double-dealing, and dissembling, are always signs of a weak and poor spirit. *St. Augustine* had said in the Fourth Book of his *Confessions*, that his soul and that of his friend were but one soul, and that his life was tedious to him after the death of his friend, because he could not live by halves; and yet that for the same cause he was unwilling to die, lest his friend should die wholly. These words afterwards seemed to him too artificial and affected, insomuch that he revokes them in the Book of his *Retractions*, and calls them folly. Thou seest, dear *Philothea*, how tender this holy soul was of affectation in speech. Surely fidelity, plainness, and sincerity, are great ornaments to a Christian life. *I have said I will take heed to my ways that I offend not in my tongue* (Ps. xxxviii. 2). *Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door which may shut my lips* (Ps. cxl. 3), says David. It is an advice of the holy king *St. Louis* to contradict no man, unless it were either sin, or great prejudice to consent to him, and this is to avoid all quarrels and disputes. But when it is necessary to contradict, or be of an opinion contrary to that of another man, use great mildness and dexterity without forcing his spirit, for nothing is gained by rude contradiction.

3. To speak little, which is so much recommended by our wise forefathers, is not to be understood that we must speak few words, but few unprofitable words; for in this matter of discourse we regard not so much the quantity as the quality, and in my opinion we ought to fly both extremes. For to be reserved and severe, refusing to contribute to the familiar discourse used in conversation, argues either distrust or disdain; and on the other side, to prate and babble always, and

give neither leisure nor opportunity to others to speak in turn, savours of shallowness and levity.

4. *St. Louis* held it not good to whisper in company, especially at the table, lest it should give occasion to others to suspect that ill is spoken of them. *He that is at table*, said he, *in good company, and has anything merry and pleasant to utter, let him speak that all the company may hear him; if it be a thing of importance, let him not speak of it at all.*

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. XLIV.—OF NOT DRAWING TO OURSELVES EXTERIOR THINGS.

CHRIST. 1. Son, in many things it behoveth thee to be ignorant, and to esteem thyself as one dead upon earth, and as one to whom the whole world is crucified.

Many things also must thou pass by with a deaf ear, and think rather of those things that appertain to thy peace.

It is more profitable to turn away thy eyes from such things as displease thee, and to leave to everyone his own way of thinking, than to give way to contentious discourses.

If thou standest well with God, and lookest to His judgment, thou wilt more easily bear to see thyself overcome.

DISCIPLE. 2. O Lord, to what are we come? Behold, a temporal loss is greatly bewailed: for a small gain men labour and toil; but the loss of the soul is little thought on, and hardly ever returns to mind.

That which is of little or no profit takes up our thoughts; and that which is above all things necessary, is negligently passed over; for the whole man sinks down into outward things, and unless he quickly recover himself, he willingly continues immersed in them.

CH. XLV.—THAT WE MAY NOT BELIEVE ALL, AND
HOW EASILY WE ERR IN SPEECH.

DISCIPLE.

1. *Grant me help, O Lord, in my tribulation, for vain is the aid of man* (Ps. lix. 13).

How often have I not found faith there where I thought I might depend upon it?

And how often have I found it where I did not expect it?

Vain, therefore, is all hope in men; but the safety of the just is in Thee, O Lord.

Blessed be Thou, O Lord, my God, in all things that befall us.

We are weak and unsettled, we are quickly deceived and changed.

2. Who is the man that is able to keep himself so warily, and with so much circumspection in all things, as not to fall sometimes into some deceit or perplexity?

But he that trusts in Thee, and seeks Thee with a simple heart does not so easily fall.

And if he falls into some tribulation, in what manner soever he may be entangled therewith, he will quickly be rescued or comforted by Thee; for Thou wilt not forsake for ever him that trusts in Thee.

A trusty friend is rarely to be found, who continues faithful in all the distresses of his friend.

Thou, O Lord, Thou alone art most faithful in all things, and besides Thee there is no other.

3. Oh! how wise was that holy soul that said: *My mind is strongly settled and grounded upon Christ* (St. Agatha).

If it were so with me, the fear of man would not so easily give me trouble, nor flying words move me.

Who can foresee all things, or who is able to provide against all future evils?

If things foreseen do nevertheless often hurt us, how can things unlooked for fail of wounding us grievously.

But why did I not provide better for myself, miserable wretch that I am? Why also have I so easily given credit to others?

But we are men, and but frail men, though by many we are reputed and called angels.

To whom shall I give credit, O Lord? to whom but Thee? Thou art the truth, which neither canst deceive nor be deceived.

And on the other side: *Every man is a liar* (Ps. cxv. 11), infirm, unstable, and subject to fail, especially in words: so that we ought not readily to believe even that which in appearance seems to sound well.

4. How wisely dost thou forewarn us to take heed of men (Matt. x. 17, 36); and that a man's enemies are those of his own household; and that we are not to believe, if anyone should say, *Behold here, or behold there* (Matt. xxiv. 23).

I have been taught to my cost, and I wish it may serve to make me more cautious not to increase my folly.

Be wary, saith one, be wary, keep to thyself what I tell thee. And whilst I hold my peace, and believe the matter to be secret, he himself cannot keep the secret which he desires me to keep, but presently discovers both me and himself, and goes his way.

From such tales and such unwary people defend me, O Lord, that I may not fall into their hands, nor ever commit the like.

Give to my mouth truth and constancy in my words; remove from me a crafty tongue.

What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all means to shun.

5. Oh! how good a thing and how peaceable it is to be silent of others, nor to believe all that is said, nor easily to report what one has heard: to lay one's self open to few; always to seek Thee, the Beholder of the heart; and not to be carried about with every wind of words; but to wish that all things may go according to the pleasure of Thy will.

How secure it is for the keeping of heavenly grace, to fly the sight of men, and not seek those things that seem to cause admiration abroad, but with all diligence to follow that which brings amendment of life and fervour.

To how many hath it been hurtful to have their virtue known and over hastily praised?

How profitable, indeed, hath grace been kept with silence in this frail life, all which is a state of temptation, and a warfare?

CH. XLVI.—OF HAVING CONFIDENCE IN GOD WHEN ARROWS OF WORDS ARE AIMED AGAINST US.

CHRIST. 1. Son, stand firm, and trust in Me, for what are words but words? They fly through the air, but hurt not a stone.

If thou art guilty, resolve willingly to amend thyself.

If thy conscience accuse thee not, resolve again willingly to suffer this for God's sake.

It is a small matter that thou shouldst sometimes bear with words, if thou hast not as yet the courage to endure hard stripes.

And why do such small things go to thy heart, but because thou art yet carnal, and regardest men more than thou oughtest?

For because thou art afraid of being despised, thou art not willing to be reprehended for thy faults, and seekest to shelter thyself in excuses.

2. But look better into thyself, and thou shalt find that the world is still living in thee, and a vain desire of pleasing men.

For when thou art unwilling to be humbled and confounded for thy defects, it is plain indeed, that thou art not truly humble, nor truly dead to the world, nor the world crucified to thee.

But give ear to My word, and thou shalt not value ten thousand words of men.

Behold, if all should be said against thee which the malice of men can invent, what hurt could it do thee, if thou wouldst let it pass, and make no account of it? Could it even so much as pluck one hair from thee?

3. But he who has not his heart *within*, nor God before his eyes, is easily moved with a word of dispraise.

Whereas, he that trusts in Me, and desires not to stand by his own judgment, will be free from the fear of men.

For I am the judge and discerner of all secrets; I know how matters are; I know him that offers the injury and him that suffers it.

From Me this word went forth; by my permission it happened: *that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed* (Luke ii. 35).

I shall judge the guilty and the innocent; but by a secret judgment I would beforehand try them both.

4. The testimony of men oftentimes deceives; My judgment is true; it shall stand and not be overthrown.

It is hidden for the most part, and to few laid open in everything; yet it never errs, nor can it err, though, to the eyes of fools, it seems not right.

To Me, therefore, must thou run in every judgment, and not depend upon thy own will.

The just man will not be troubled, whatever happens to him from God (Prov. xii. 21).

And if anything be wrongfully pronounced against him, he will not much care:

Neither will he vainly rejoice, if by others he be reasonably excused.

For he considers *that I am He that searcheth the heart and the reins* (Apoc. ii. 23); who judgeth not according to the face, nor according to human appearance.

For that, oftentimes, is found blameworthy in My eyes, which in the judgment of men is esteemed commendable.

DISCIPLE. 5. O Lord God, the just Judge strong and patient, who knowest the frailty and perverseness of men, be Thou my strength and all my confidence, for my own conscience sufficeth me not.

Thou knowest that which I know not; and therefore in every reprehension I ought to humble myself, and bear it with meekness.

Pardon me, I beseech Thee, in Thy mercy as often as I have not done thus, and give me again the grace to suffer still more.

For better to me is Thy great mercy, for the obtaining of pardon, than the justice which I imagine in myself for the defence of my hidden conscience.

Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justify myself; for setting Thy mercy aside, *no man living shall be justified in thy sight* (Ps. cxlii. 2).

LESSON XLII.

That we must be Faithful both in Great and Small Occasions: That we must Keep our Mind Just and Reasonable: Of Desires: Of Concealing Grace under the Guardianship of Humility.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater: and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater.
—Luke xvi. 10.

All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets.—Matt. vii. 12.

This therefore I say, brethren: the time is short: it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none: and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoiced, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without solicitude.—1 Cor. vii. 29.

Then he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: Stay you here, and watch with me. And going a little further, he fell upon his face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.—Matt. xxvi. 38.

These words teach you—1, What ought to be your fidelity to God; 2, your just dealing with your neigh-

bour; 3, that it is vain to cherish and multiply desires, since you should be free from all; 4, that in spiritual aridities you have occasions to imitate Christ. Now listen to your two masters.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. XXXV.—THAT WE MUST BE FAITHFUL BOTH IN GREAT AND SMALL OCCASIONS.

1. The Sacred Spouse in the *Canticle* says that His Spouse had stolen away His heart with one of her eyes, and one of her hairs. Now among all the exterior parts of man's body none is more noble, be it for the workmanship or for the activity, than the eye, none is meaner than the hair. Wherefore the Divine Spouse would have us know that He accepts not only the great works of devout persons, but even the least and the meanest, and, that to serve Him according to His liking, we must take great care to serve Him well, not only in great and high things, but also in low and abject: since we may equally by the one and the other rob Him of His heart by love.

2. Prepare yourself then, *Philothea*, to suffer many great afflictions, yea, martyrdom itself, for God's sake. Resolve to give Him all that you esteem most precious, if it shall please Him to take it—father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, children, yea, even your own eyes and your life; for to all this you ought to prepare your heart. But while His Divine providence sends you not afflictions so sensible and heavy, and requires not your eyes, at least give Him your hair. I mean, suffer meekly small injuries, such little inconveniences and inconsiderable losses as daily happen; for by the means of such little occasions, managed with love and charity, you shall gain His heart entirely and

make it your own. These little daily charities, this headache, this toothache, this rheum, this humour of a husband or wife, this breaking of a glass, this contempt, or that scorn, this loss of a pair of gloves, of a ring, a handkerchief, any little inconvenience in going late to bed, and rising early to pray, to communicate, the little shamefacedness we have in doing some acts of devotion in public, briefly all these little sufferings, accepted and embraced for the love of God, infinitely please His Divine goodness who for one glass of water has promised the ocean of felicity to His servants; and because these occasions offer themselves every moment, the well managing of them will be a great means to heap up spiritual treasures.

3. When I read in the life of *St. Catherine of Siena*, so many raptures and elevations of spirit, so many wise sayings, and even sermons made by her, I doubt not but that, with this fair eye of contemplation, she had stolen away the heart of her Heavenly Spouse; but I was no less pleased to find her in her father's kitchen turning the spit, mending the fire, dressing the meat, kneading the bread, and doing the meanest offices of the house with courage, full of love and charity towards God. And I esteem no less the little and humble meditations she made amidst these mean employments than the ecstasies and raptures she so often had, which, peradventure, were given her only in recompense of this humility and abjection. Now her meditations were like this: when she prepared the meat for her father, she imagined that she prepared it for our Saviour, like *St. Martha*, and that her mother was in place of our Blessed Lady, and her brothers instead of the Apostles; in this sort exciting herself to serve in spirit

all the court of heaven, and employing herself with great delight in such low service, because she knew it was God's will. I have brought this example, *Philothea*, that you may know of what importance it is, rightly to direct all your actions, be they never so mean, to the service of His Divine Majesty.

4. Wherefore I earnestly counsel you to imitate the courageous woman whom the great *Solomon* so highly commends. She set her hand, as he says, to high, generous, and important things, and yet disdained not to handle the distaff and spindle. Put your hands to great things, exercising yourself in prayer and meditation, and frequenting the Sacraments, endeavouring to excite the love of God in souls, to infuse good inspirations into hearts, and, in a word, to do great and excellent good works according to your calling; but withal, forget not your distaff and spindle, that is, practise these low and humble virtues which, like flowers, grow at the foot of the Cross, as serving the poor, visiting the sick, care of your family with the works depending thereupon, and use herein all profitable diligence which will keep you from idleness. And among all these things mingle such considerations as I have related above of *St. Catherine*.

5. Great occasions of serving God present themselves but seldom, but little ones are ordinary. *Now he that shall be faithful in small matters*, says our Saviour, *shall be set over great things*. Do all things, then, in the name of God, and they will be well done. Whether you eat, drink, sleep, recreate yourself, or turn the spit, so you know how to manage your business well, you will profit much in the sight of God, doing all these things because God wills that you should do them.

CH. XXXVI.—THAT WE MUST KEEP OUR MIND JUST AND REASONABLE.

1. We are not men but by our reason, and yet it is a rare thing to find men who are truly reasonable ; because self-love ordinarily decoys us away from reason, leading us insensibly to a thousand kinds of small yet dangerous injustices and partialities, which, like the little foxes of the Canticles, destroy the vines ; for because they are little we regard them not, and because they are many they cannot but greatly injure us.

2. Are not the things of which I am now about to speak unjust and unreasonable ? We accuse our neighbours in small matters, and excuse ourselves in great ; we would sell very dear, and buy very cheap ; we desire that justice should be executed in another man's house, but mercy and connivance in our own. Our words must be well taken, but we are captious and touchy at those of others. We would have our neighbour leave us his goods, taking our money, but is it not more reasonable that he should keep his goods and leave us our money ? We take it ill that he will not accommodate us, has he not more reason to be displeased with us for desiring to incommode him ?

3. If we affect one exercise, we despise all others, and quarrel with everything that pleases not our own fancy. If there be any of our inferiors who have not pleasing manners, or to whom we have once taken a dislike, do he what he will, we take it in ill part, and never cease to vex and perplex him. On the contrary, if any man please us by a more agreeable behaviour, he can do nothing but we will excuse it.

There are virtuous children whom their parents can scarce abide to look upon, because of some bodily imperfection. There are vicious children that are their favourites for some corporal handsomeness. In all things we prefer the rich before the poor, although they be neither of better condition nor so virtuous, nay, we prefer them that are best clad. We desire to have our own dues exactly, but that others should be gentle in demanding theirs. We keep our own rank very precisely, but would have others humble and complying. We complain easily of our neighbour, but none must complain of us. What we do for others always seems to us very much, but what others do for us seems nothing. In a word, we are like the partridges in *Paphlagonia*, which have two hearts; for we have one heart mild, favourable, and courteous towards ourselves, and another heart hard, severe, and rigorous towards our neighbour; we have two balances, one to weigh our own commodities with all advantage possible, the other to weigh those of our neighbours with as much disadvantage as we can. The Scripture says, *Deceitful lips have spoken in heart and heart* (Ps. xi. 3), that is to say, they have two hearts; and they have two weights, the one heavy wherewith to receive, and the other light wherewith to give, which is abominable in the sight of God.

4. *Philothea*, be equal and just in your actions, set yourself always in your neighbour's place, and put him in yours, and so shall you judge aright. Make yourself the seller in buying, and the buyer in selling, and you shall be sure to sell and buy justly. All these injustices are small, because they oblige not to restitution, inasmuch as we exceed not the

limits of rigour in what is for our advantage, but they cease not to oblige us to mend them; for they are great defects in reason and charity, and when all is done, they are but mere fancied gain. For a man loses nothing by living generously, nobly, and freely, with a royal, upright, and liberal heart. Forget not then, *Philothea*, often to examine if your heart be such towards your neighbour as you would have his towards you if you were in his place, for this is the touchstone of true reason. *Trajan* being blamed by his friends for making the imperial majesty too accessible, said, *And ought I not to be such an emperor towards private men as I would desire an emperor to be towards me, if I were a private man myself?*

CH. XXXVII.—OF DESIRES.

1. Every one knows that we ought to refrain from desiring vicious things, for the desire of evil makes us evil. But I say yet more. *Philothea*, desire not those things which are dangerous to the soul, as dancing, gaming, and other such pastimes, nor honours, nor offices, nor visions and ecstasies; for there is much danger, vanity, and deceit in such things. Desire not things which are far off; that is, such as cannot happen in a long time, as many do, who thereby weary and distract their hearts unprofitably, and put themselves in danger of great disquiet. If a young man desire earnestly to be provided with some office before the time come, to what purpose, I pray, serves this? If a married woman desire to be a nun, to what purpose? If I desire to buy my neighbour's goods before he desire to sell them, lose I not my labour in this desire? If

being sick I desire to preach, or to say mass, to visit others that are sick, and to perform the exercises of those who are in health, are not these vain desires, since it is not then in my power to effect them? And in the meantime these unprofitable desires fill up the place of others which I should have, of being patient, resigned, well mortified, very obedient, meek and mild in adversities, which is what God would have me to practise at that time. But our desires commonly are like whimsical women's, who long for cherries in autumn, and grapes in the spring.

2. I can no way approve that persons engaged in any employment and vocation, should dream of desiring any other kind of life than that which agrees with their duty, or busy themselves in exercises incompatible with their present condition; for this consumes the heart, and makes it unfit for its necessary duties. If I desire the solitude of a *Carthusian*, I lose my time, for this desire supplies the place of that which I ought to have to employ myself well in my present office. No, neither would I that one should desire better wit, or better judgment. For these desires are but vain, and fill the place of that which every one ought to have of managing his own, such as it is. Nor would I that a man should desire those means of serving God which he has not, but that he faithfully employ those which he has. Now, this is to be understood of desires which distract the heart; for simple wishes, if they be not too frequent, do no harm at all.

3. Desire not crosses except in proportion to the patience wherewith you have supported those which have been already sent you. For it is an abuse to

desire martyrdom, and not have the courage to bear an injury. The enemy often provokes us to ardent desires of things absent and such as we shall never obtain, thereby to divert us from present objects, wherein, how mean soever, we might much profit ourselves. We fight with the monsters of *Africa* in imagination, and in the meantime, for want of attention, we suffer ourselves in effect to be slain by the little serpents that lie in the path. Desire not temptations, for that were rashness; but employ your heart to expect them courageously, and to defend yourself from them when they shall come.

4. Variety of meats, especially if the quantity be great, always overcharges the stomach, and, if it be weak, destroys it. Overcharge not your soul with a multitude of thoughts, neither worldly, for those will ruin you, nor yet spiritual, for these will perplex you. When the soul is purged, and finds herself free from ill humours, she has an earnest appetite for spiritual things, and as if she were famished sets her desire on a thousand sorts of exercises of piety, of mortification, of penance, of humility, of charity, and of prayer. *Philothea*, it is a good sign to have so good an appetite; but consider whether you can well digest all that you desire to eat. Choose, then, by advice of your ghostly father, amongst so many desires those which may be practised, and put them presently in execution, and make your uttermost profit of them; that done, God will send you others, which you shall also practise in their seasons, and so not lose your time in unprofitable desires. I say not that we should lose any good desire, but that we should produce them in order: so that those which cannot

presently be effected may be locked up in some corner of our heart till their time come, and in the interim we may practise those which are already ripe and in season. This I speak not only for religious persons, but also for seculars, for without this we cannot live but in great solicitude and unquietness.

IMITATION.—BK. III., CH. VII.—OF CONCEALING GRACE UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF HUMILITY.

CHRIST.

1. My son, it is more profitable and more safe for thee to hide the grace of devotion and not to be elevated with it, not to speak much of it, not to consider it much; but rather to despise thyself the more, and to be afraid of it as given to one unworthy.

Thou must not depend too much on this affection, which may be quickly changed into the contrary.

When thou hast grace, think with thyself how miserable and poor thou art wont to be when thou art without it.

Nor doth the progress of a spiritual life consist so much in having the grace of consolation, as in bearing the want of it with humility, resignation, and patience; so as not to grow remiss in the exercise of prayer at that time, nor to suffer thyself to omit any of thy accustomed good works.

But that thou willingly do what lies in thee, according to the best of thy ability and understanding; and take care not wholly to neglect thyself through the dryness or anxiety of mind which thou perceivest.

2. For there are many who, when things succeed not well with them, presently grow impatient or slothful.

Now *the way of man is not always in his own power*; but it belongs to God to give, and to comfort when He will, and as much as He will and to whom He will, and as it shall please Him, and no more.

Some, wanting discretion, have ruined themselves upon occasion of the grace of devotion ; because they were desirous of doing more than they could, not weighing well the measure of their own weakness, but following rather the inclination of the heart than the dictates of reason.

And because they presumptuously undertook greater things than were pleasing to God, therefore they quickly lost His grace.

They became needy, and were left in a wretched condition, who had built themselves a nest in heaven ; to the end that, being thus humbled and impoverished, they might learn not to trust to their own wings, but to hide themselves under Mine.

Those who are as yet but novices and inexperienced in the way of the Lord, if they will not govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, will be easily deceived and overthrown.

3. And if they will rather follow their own judgment than believe others who have more experience, they will be in danger of coming off ill, if they continue to refuse to lay down their own conceits.

They that are wise in their own eyes seldom humbly suffer themselves to be ruled by others.

It is better to have little knowledge with humility and a weak understanding, than greater treasures of learning with self-conceit.

It is better for thee to have less than much, which may puff thee up with pride.

He is not so discreet as he ought to be, who gives himself up wholly to joy, forgetting his former poverty, and the chaste fear of God, which apprehends the losing that grace which is offered.

Neither is he so virtuously wise who, in the time of adversity or any tribulation, whatsoever, carries himself in a desponding way, and conceives and reposes less confidence in Me than he ought.

4. He who is too secure in the time of peace, will often be found too much dejected and fearful in the time of war.

If thou couldst but always continue humble and little in thy own eyes, and keep thy spirit in due order and subjection, thou wouldst not fall so easily into dangers and offences.

It is a good counsel, that when thou hast conceived the spirit of fervour, thou shouldst meditate how it will be with thee when that light shall leave thee.

Which, when it shall happen, remember that the light may return again, which for thy instruction, and My glory, I have withdrawn from thee for a time.

5. Such a trial is oftentimes more profitable than if thou wert always to have prosperity according to thy will.

For man's merits are not to be estimated by his having many visions or consolations, nor by his knowledge of the Scriptures, nor by his being placed in a more elevated station ; but by his being grounded in true humility, and replenished with divine charity ; by his seeking always, purely and entirely, the honour of God ; by his esteeming himself as nothing, and sincerely despising himself ; and being better pleased to be despised and humbled by others, than to be the object of their esteem.

LESSON XLIII.

That we must not Regard the Discourse of the Children of the World: That we must Always have a Good Courage: Against the Vain Judgments of Men: In what Firm Peace and True Progress consists.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand: because it is spiritually examined.—

1 Cor. ii. 14.

Then came his disciples, and said to him: Dost thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word, were scandalized? But he answering said: Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.—

Matt. xv. 12.

*Think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.—*Heb. xii. 3.

But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day; but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.—

1 Cor. iv. 3.

These words tell you—1, What to expect from the judgment of men; 2, how to behave with regard to it;

3, that your courage should not falter, but rather increase with contradiction. Each master has advice for you on this matter.

INTRODUCTION—PT. IV., CH. I.—THAT WE MUST NOT REGARD THE DISCOURSE OF THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

1. As soon as the children of this world shall perceive you desire to lead a devout life, they will discharge against you a thousand arrows of idle tales and detractions. The most malicious will brand your change with hypocrisy, dissimulation, and superstition. They will tell you that because the world looks ill upon you and is not your friend, you presently run to God. Your friends will strain themselves to make you a world of remonstrances, very wise and charitable as they imagine. They will tell you you will fall into some melancholy humour; you will lose your credit in the world and render yourself unsociable; you will grow old before your time; your domestic affairs will suffer thereby; you must live in the world as one in the world, and salvation may be obtained without so many mysteries, and a thousand such like imperinences.

2. *Philothea*, all this is but vain and foolish prattling. These people regard neither your health nor business. *If you were of the world*, says our Blessed Saviour, *the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you* (John xv. 19). We see gentlemen and ladies pass a whole night, nay, many nights together, at cards and chess, and is there any attention more dull or melancholy than that? And yet worldlings say not a word; friends never trouble themselves; but

for one hour's meditation, or rising in the morning a little earlier than ordinary to prepare ourselves for communion, every one runs to the physician to cure us of hypochondriac humours and the jaundice. We may spend thirty nights in dancing, and none complains of it; but for watching one Christmas night, every one coughs and complains of cholic the next morning. Who sees not that the world is an unjust judge—favourable and partial to its own children, sharp and rigorous to the children of God?

3. We can never be upon good terms with the world but in casting away ourselves with it; it is impossible for us to content it, it is too fantastical. *John came neither eating nor drinking*, says our Saviour, *and ye say the devil is in him. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a glutton, and a drinker of wine* (Luke vii. 33). It is most true, *Philothea*, if we comply with the world, and give ourselves a liberty to laugh, to dance, and to play with it, it will be scandalized; if we do not so, it will accuse us of hypocrisy or melancholy. If we make ourselves brave, the world will interpret it to some ill end; if we are carefully clad, it will account us mean and abject spirits. Our mirth will be called dissolution, our mortification sullenness, and looking upon us with a malicious eye, we can never be acceptable to it. It aggravates our imperfections, publishing them for sins; our venial sins, it makes mortal, and those of frailty it raises to sins of malice. Where *charity is benign*, as *St. Paul* says, the world is malicious; where charity judges ill of none, the world, on the contrary, judges ill of all; and when unable to accuse our actions, it accuses our intentions: have the sheep horns or no, be they white or black, the wolf will not spare to devour them if he can.

4. Do what we can, the world will still oppose us; if we be long at confession, it will wonder how we can have so much to say; if we stay but awhile, it will say we have not confessed all; it will observe all our motions, and for one only little word of choler, it will protest that we are insupportable. The care of our affairs will seem to it covetousness, and our meekness silliness; but, as for the children of the world, their choler is generosity, their avarice is good husbandry, their familiarities honourable entertainment. Spiders always destroy the work of the bees.

5. Let us let alone this blind world, *Philothea*; let it cry as long as it will, like an owl, to disquiet the birds of the day. Let us be firm in our designs, constant in our resolutions, our perseverance will demonstrate whether it be in good earnest that we have sacrificed ourselves to God, and reduced ourselves to a devout life. Comets and planets are almost of an equal brightness in appearance, but comets soon vanish away, being but flying fires, whereas planets have a lasting clearness. So hypocrisy and true virtue have a great resemblance in show, but one is easily known from the other, because hypocrisy lasts not long, vanishing like smoke, but true virtue is always firm and constant.

6. It is no small help towards the securing of our devotion, to suffer reproaches and calumny in the beginning of it; for by that means we avoid the danger of pride and vain-glory, which are like midwives of *Egypt*, appointed by the infernal *Pharaoh*, to kill the male children of the *Israelites* the very day of their birth. We are crucified to the world, let the world be crucified to us. It accounts us fools, let us esteem it mad.

CH. II.—THAT WE MUST ALWAYS HAVE A GOOD COURAGE.

1. Light, though it be most beautiful and delectable to our eyes, dazzles them, notwithstanding, after they have been long in darkness. And before we are grown familiar with the inhabitants of any country, let them be never so courteous and friendly, we find ourselves somewhat strange amongst them. It may be, *Philothea*, that upon this change of life, divers reluctances will arise in your heart, and that this great and general farewell, which you have given to the follies and vanities of the world, will cause in you some sadness and discouragement. If that happen, have a little patience, I pray, for it will come to nothing; it is but a little strangeness which novelty brings you; let that pass over, and you shall receive a million of consolations.

2. It will trouble you at first, it may be, to forsake that glory which fools and flatterers gave you in your vanities; but would you lose that eternity of true glory which God will give you? The vain trifles and pastimes in which you employed your former years will present themselves again to your heart, to entice it, and to cause it to return to them, but can you renounce this blessed eternity for such deceitful trash? Believe me, if you persevere, you will quickly find sweetness so heartfelt, so pleasant and delicious, that you will confess that the world has nothing but gall in comparison of this honey, and that one day of devotion is better worth than a thousand years of a worldly life.

3. But you see that the mountain of Christian perfection is exceeding high. O my God, say you,

how shall I be able to climb up it? Courage! *Philothea*, when the little young bees begin to take shape, we call them nymphs, and then they cannot fly to the sweet flowers, or to the hills and neighbouring mountains to gather honey; but by little and little, feeding on the honey which the old ones prepare for them, these little young ones get wings and strengthen themselves, so that afterwards they fly to gain their living all over the country. It is true we are now but little bees in devotion, and not able to fly up so high as we desire, which is even to the height of Christian perfection, but yet we begin to take shape by our desires and resolutions, and our wings begin to grow. We must then hope that we shall be one day spiritual bees and able to fly; in the meantime, let us live upon the honey of the many good instructions which ancient devout persons have left us, and pray God to give us wings like the dove, that we may not only fly during the time of this present life, but also rest in the eternity of that to come.

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. XXXVI.—AGAINST THE
VAIN JUDGMENTS OF MEN.

CHRIST.

1. Son, cast thy heart firmly on the Lord, and fear not the judgment of man, when thy conscience gives testimony of thy piety and innocence.

It is good and happy to suffer in this way; nor will this be grievous to an humble heart, nor to him who trusts in God more than in himself.

Many say many things, and therefore little credit is to be given to them.

Neither is it possible to satisfy all.

Though Paul endeavoured to please all in the Lord, and make himself all unto all; yet he made little

account of his being judged by the judgment of men (1 Cor. iv. 3).

2. He laboured for the edification and salvation of others, as much as could, and as lay in him ; but he could not prevent his being sometimes judged or despised by others.

Therefore he committed all to God, who knows all, and defended himself by patience and humility against the tongues of those that spoke evil, or that thought and gave out at pleasure vain and faulty things of him.

However, he answered them sometimes, lest his silence might give occasion of scandal to the weak.

3. Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a mortal man? To-day he is, and to-morrow he appears no more.

Fear God, and thou shalt have no need of being afraid of man.

What can any one do against thee by his words and injuries? He rather hurts himself than thee ; nor can he escape the judgment of God, whoever he be.

See thou have God before thine eyes, and do not contend with complaining words.

And if at present thou seem to be overcome, and to suffer a confusion which thou hast not deserved, do not repine at this, and do not lessen thy crown by impatience.

Rather look up to Me in heaven, who am able to deliver thee from all confusion and wrong, and to repay every one according to his works.

BK. III., CH. XXV.—IN WHAT FIRM PEACE OF THE HEART AND TRUE PROGRESS DOTH CONSIST.

CHRIST. 1. Son, I have said, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you* (John xiv. 27).

Peace is what all desire ; but all care not for those things which appertain to true *peace*.

My *peace* is with the humble and meek of heart.
Thy peace shall be with much patience.

If thou wilt hear Me, and follow My voice, thou wilt enjoy much patience.

DISCIPLE. 2. What, then, shall I do, Lord?

CHRIST. 3. In everything attend to thyself, what thou art doing, and what thou art saying; and direct thy whole intention to this, that thou mayest please Me alone, and neither desire nor seek anything out of Me.

And as for the sayings or doings of others, judge of nothing rashly; neither busy thyself with things not committed to thy care; and thus will it be brought about that thou shalt be little or seldom disturbed.

But never to feel any trouble at all, nor to suffer any grief of heart or body, is not the state of this present life, but of everlasting rest.

Think not, therefore, that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no burden; nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversity; nor that thou hast attained to perfection, if all things be done according to thy inclination.

Neither do thou conceive a great opinion of thyself, or imagine thyself to be especially beloved, if thou experience great devotion and sweetness: for it is not in such things as these that a true lover of virtue is known, nor doth the progress and perfection of a man consist in these things.

DISCIPLE. 4. In what, then, O Lord?

CHRIST. 5. In offering thyself with thy whole heart to the will of God; not seeking the things that are thine, either in little or great, either in time or eternity.

So that with the same equal countenance thou continue giving thanks, both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all things in an equal balance.

If thou come to be so valiant and long-suffering in hope, that when interior comfort is withdrawn thou canst prepare thy heart to suffer still more, and

dost not justify thyself, as if thou oughtest not to suffer such great things, but acknowledgest My justice in all My appointments, and praisest My holy name, then it is that thou walkest in the true and right way of peace, and mayest hope without any doubt to see My face again with great joy.

And if thou arrive at an entire contempt of thyself, know that then thou shalt enjoy an abundance of peace, as much as is possible in this state of banishment.

LESSON XLIV.

Of the Nature of Temptations, and the Difference
between Feeling them and Consenting to them :
Of the Advantage of Adversity : Of Resisting
Temptations.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man : but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? The grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. vii. 21.

And lest the greatness of the revelations should lift me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me : and he said to me : My grace is sufficient for thee : for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.—2 Cor. xii. 7.

For we have not a high-priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities : but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace : that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.—Heb. iv. 15.

For in that, wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted, he is able to succour them also that are tempted.—Heb. ii. 18.

Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. . . . For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood : but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace : in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation : and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God).—Eph. vi. 10.

These words show you that temptation must be endured by all ; and they state for what purpose God permits it. The example of our Divine Master ought to animate His disciples, and make them take up their spiritual arms. Your two teachers give detailed instructions for the actual conflict, discovering the snares of the foe, and showing you how to handle your weapons.

INTRODUCTION—PT. III., CH. III.—OF THE NATURE OF TEMPTATIONS, AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FEELING THEM AND CONSENTING TO THEM.

1. Figure to yourself, *Philothea*, a young princess extremely beloved of her husband, and that some wicked wretch, to lead her astray, sends her an infamous messenger to treat with her about his mischievous design. First, this messenger proposes to the princess

the intent of his master; secondly, the princess approves, or disapproves, the proposition and message; thirdly, she either consents or refuses. So the world, the flesh, and the devil, seeing a soul espoused to the Son of God, send their temptations and suggestions by which, first, sin is propounded to her; secondly, she is either pleased or displeased with the motion; thirdly, she either consents or refuses; which are in sum the three steps to descend to wickedness—temptation, delectation, and consent. And though these three actions are not so manifestly discerned in other kinds of sins, yet are they palpably seen in all great and grievous sins.

2. Though the temptation of any sin whatsoever should last all our life, it could not make us displeasing to the Divine Majesty, so that it delight us not, and that we gave no consent to it. The reason is, because in temptation we are not active but passive; and since we take no pleasure in it, we can have no guilt of it. *St. Paul* suffered a long time the temptations of the flesh, and yet was so far from being displeasing to God for it that, on the contrary, God was glorified by it. The blessed *St. Angela de Foligno* felt such vehement temptations, that she moves to compassion when she relates them. Great, likewise, were the temptations which *St. Francis* and *St. Benedict* suffered, when the one cast himself into snow, and the other into thorns, to mitigate them; yet they lost nothing of God's grace for all that, but augmented it.

3. You must then be very courageous, *Philothea*, amidst temptations, and never hold yourself vanquished so long as they displease you. Observe well, the difference between feeling and consenting to*

* Sentir et Consentir.

temptation, which is, that we may feel them though they displease us, but we can never consent to them unless they please us ; since pleasure ordinarily serves as a step to consent. Let then the enemies of our salvation present to us as many baits as they will, let them wait always at the door of our heart to get in, let them make as many provocations as they list ; as long as we have a resolution to take no pleasure in all that, it is not possible that we can offend God, no more than the prince, husband to the princess whom I have represented, can be displeased with her for the message sent to her, if she have taken no pleasure in it. Yet there is this difference between the soul, and this princess, in this particular, that the princess, having heard the unholy proposition, may, if she please, drive away the messenger and hear him no more, but it is not always in the power of the soul not to feel temptation, though it be always in her power not to consent to it. For which cause, although the temptation should last and persevere a long time, yet can it not hurt us so long as it displeases us.

4. But as to the delectation which may follow temptation, inasmuch as there are two parts of our soul, the one inferior and the other superior, and the inferior follows not always the superior, but acts by itself—it happens oftentimes that the inferior part takes delight in the temptation without the consent, nay, against the will of the superior. This is the dispute and the war which the Apostle *St. Paul* describes, when he says that his flesh rebelled against his spirit, that there is a law of the members, and a law of the spirit, and such other things.

5. Have you ever seen, *Philothea*, a great hearth covered with ashes ? whoso comes ten or twelve hours

after to seek fire finds none but a little in the midst of the hearth, and that very hard to be found. Yet there it was, since there it is found, and with it all the other coals already dead are kindled. It is just so with charity, which is our spiritual life, amongst great and violent temptations; for temptation, casting her delectation into the inferior part, covers all the soul, as it seems, with ashes, and reduces the love of God into a narrow compass; for it appears not anywhere but in the midst of the heart, in the centre of the spirit, and yet it seems not to be there, and we have much ado to find it; but there it is, since, howsoever all may be in disorder in our soul and in our body, we still retain a resolution never to consent to sin or temptation, and the delectation which pleases the outward man displeases the inward; so that though it encompass our will, yet it is not within it; by which we see that such delectation is contrary to the will, and, being so, can be no sin. The combat of *S^t. Catherine* of *Siena* lasted very long, till one day our Saviour appearing to her, she said to Him: Where were you, my sweet Saviour, when my heart was so full of so great darkness and uncleanness? and He answered: I was within thy heart, My daughter. And how, replied she, could you dwell in my heart, where there was so much evil? can you dwell then in such unclean places? and our Saviour said: Tell Me, did the thoughts of the heart bring thee pleasure or sadness, bitterness or delight? Most extreme bitterness and sorrow, said she. And our Saviour replied: Who was it, then, that put this exceeding bitterness and sorrow into thy heart but I, that lay there hidden in the midst of thy soul? Believe Me, daughter, had I not been there present, these

thoughts which surrounded thy will, and could not prevail, had doubtless overcome it, and entered in, and had been received by the free-will, and so had brought death to thy soul; but because I was within, I armed thy heart with this bitterness and this resistance, by which it opposed the temptation as much as it could, and not being able to perform what it desired, conceived a vehement displeasure and deadly hatred against temptation, and against itself, and so these troubles were a great merit and advantage to thee, and an exceeding increase of thy virtue and courage.

3. Do you see, *Philothea*? The fire was covered with ashes, and temptation and delight were even entered into the heart, and had encompassed the will which, only assisted by her Saviour, made resistance by griefs, by displeasures, and detestations of the evil suggested to her, constantly refusing her consent to the sin which besieged her. Oh, what distress is it to a soul that loves God, not so much as to know whether He be in her or no, or whether the Divine Love for which she fights be altogether extinguished in her or no! But this is the sweetest flower of the perfection of heavenly love, to make the lover suffer and fight for love, not knowing whether he have that love for which, and by which, he fights.

IMITATION—BK. I., CH. XII.—OF THE GOOD OF ADVERSITY.

1. It is good for us to have sometimes troubles and adversities; for they make a man enter into himself, that he may know that he is in a state of banishment, and may not place his hopes in anything of this world.

It is good that we sometimes suffer contradictions, and that men have an evil or imperfect opinion of us, even when we do or intend well.

These things are often helps to humility, and defend us from vain-glory.

For then we better run to God, our inward witness, when outwardly we are despised by men, and little credit is given to us.

2. Therefore should a man establish himself in such manner in God, as to have no need of seeking many comforts from men.

When a *man of good will* is troubled, or tempted, or afflicted with evil thoughts, then he better understands what need he hath of God, without whom he finds he can do no good.

Then also he laments, he sighs and prays, by reason of the miseries which he suffers.

Then he is weary of living longer, and wishes death to come, that he may be *dissolved and be with Christ*.

Then also he well perceives that perfect security and full peace cannot be found in this world.

BK. 1., CH. XIII.—OF RESISTING TEMPTATION.

1. As long as we live in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation.

Hence it is written in Job (vii. 1): *Man's life upon earth is a temptation.*

Therefore ought every one to be solicitous about his temptations, and to watch in prayer, lest the devil (who never sleeps, but *goes about seeking whom he may devour*) find room to deceive him.

No man is so perfect and holy as not to have sometimes temptations; and we cannot be wholly without them.

2. Temptations are very often profitable to a man, although they be troublesome and grievous; for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed.

All the saints have passed through many tribulations and temptations, and have profited by them; and they who could not support temptations, have become reprobates, and fallen off.

There is not any order so holy, nor place so retired, where there are not temptations and adversities.

3. A man is never entirely secure from temptations as long as he lives; because we have within us the source of temptation, having been born in concupiscence.

When one temptation or tribulation is over, another comes on; and we shall have always something to suffer, because we have lost the good of our original happiness.

Many seek to fly temptations, and fall more grievously into them.

By flight alone we cannot overcome; but by patience and true humility we are made stronger than all our enemies.

4. He who only declines them outwardly, and does not pluck out the root, will profit little; nay, temptations will the sooner return to him, and he will find himself in a worse condition.

By degrees, and by patience, with longanimity, thou shalt, by God's grace, better overcome them, than by harshness and thine own importunity.

In temptation often take counsel, and deal not roughly with one that is tempted; but comfort him, as thou wouldst wish to be done to thyself.

5. Inconstancy of mind, and small confidence in God, is the beginning of all temptations.

For as a ship without a rudder is tossed to and fro by the waves, so the man who is remiss, and who quits his resolution, is many ways tempted.

Fire tries iron, and temptation tries a just man.

We often know not what we can do; but temptation discovers what we are.

6. However, we must be watchful, especially in the beginning of temptation; because then the

enemy is easier overcome, when he is not suffered to come in at the door of the soul, but is kept out, and resisted at his first knock.

Whence a certain man said: *Withstand the beginning ; after-remedies come too late.*

For first a bare thought comes to the mind ; then a strong imagination ; afterwards delight, and evil motion and consent.

And thus, by little and little, the wicked enemy gets full entrance, when he is not resisted in the beginning.

And how much the longer a man is negligent in resisting, so much the weaker does he daily become in himself, and the enemy becomes stronger against him.

7. Some suffer great temptations in the beginning of their conversion, and some in the end.

And some there are who are much troubled in a manner all their lifetime.

Some are but lightly tempted, according to that wisdom and equity of the ordinance of God, who weighs the state and merits of men, and pre-ordains all for the salvation of His elect.

8. We must not therefore despair when we are tempted, but pray to God with so much the more fervour, that He may vouchsafe to help us in all tribulations ; who, no doubt according to the saying of St. Paul, will *make such issue with the temptation, that we may be able to sustain it* (1 Cor. x. 13).

Let us, therefore, humble ourselves under the hand of God in all temptations and tribulations ; for *he will save the humble in spirit, and exalt them* (Ps. xxxiii. 19).

9. In temptations and tribulations, a man is proved as to what progress he has made ; and in them there is greater merit, and his virtue appears more conspicuous.

Nor is it much if a man be devout and fervent when he feels no trouble ; but if in the time of adversity he bears up with patience, there will be hope of a great advancement.

Some are preserved from great temptations, and are often overcome in daily little ones ; that being humble, they may never presume of themselves in great things, who are weak in such small occurrences.

LESSON XLV.

An Encouragement to a Soul in Temptation : How Temptation and Delectation may be Sin ; Of the Small Number of the Lovers of the Cross of Jesus : That there is no Being Secure from Temptation in this Life : Of the Consideration of Human Misery.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him.—James i. 12.

And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able : but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.—1 Cor. x. 13.

But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death.—James i. 14.

From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients, and scribes, and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him, saying : Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee. Who turning, said to Peter, Go behind me, Satan ; thou art a scandal unto me : because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men. Then Jesus said to his dis-

ciples : If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—Matt. xvi. 21.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry.—Matt. iv. 1.

For we also, who are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burthened : because we would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now he that maketh us for this very thing, is God, who hath given us the pledge of the Spirit. Therefore having always confidence, knowing that, while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.—2. Cor. v. 4.

These words ought greatly to encourage you ; for they declare the blessing that temptation is, and the help and favour of God to those who are faithful, and the way our Lord drives from Him those who are remiss and cowardly. When Christ Himself suffers, and is tempted in His assumed Nature, who shall claim exemption ? Considering then the miseries of this life, like a brave soldier be generous, and choose rather to strive against and overcome difficulties, than be enervated under the yoke of the passions in laziness and sloth. Thus also speak your masters.

INTRODUCTION, PT. IV., CH. V.—AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO A SOUL IN TEMPTATION.

1. These assaults and strong temptations, *Philothea*, are never permitted by God but against those souls which He means to elevate to His pure and excellent love. Yet it follows not that after all they shall be sure to attain to it ; for it often happens that those who have been constant in violent assaults

afterwards not corresponding faithfully with the grace of God, are overcome with very small temptations. This, I say, to the end that, if you chance at any time to be afflicted with so great temptations, you may know that God favours you with an extraordinary grace, by which He declares that He will exalt you in His sight, and that nevertheless you may be always humble and timorous, not assuring yourself to be able to overcome small temptations after you have prevailed against great ones, saving only by continued fidelity towards His Majesty.

2. What temptations soever, then, shall happen to you, and what delectation soever follows upon them, so long as your will shall refuse her consent both to the temptation and to the delectation, trouble not yourself by any means, for God is not offended with you. When a man is in a trance, so that there appears no sign of life in him, they usually lay their hands on his heart, and by the least motion they feel there they judge him alive, and that, by means of some precious water or restorative, he may return to his strength and senses. So it happens sometimes that, by the violence of temptation, our soul seems to be fallen into so utter a decay of all her forces that, being as in a trance, she has no more spiritual life or motion; but if we will know in what state she is, let us lay our hand on the heart. Let us consider if the heart and will do yet retain their spiritual motion, that is, if they do their duty in refusing consent and compliance with the temptation and delectation; for so long as this motion of refusal is in our heart, we may be assured that charity, the life of our soul, remains yet in us, and that Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is there present, though hidden and secretly; so that

by virtue of continual prayer, of the Sacraments, and of confidence in God, we shall recover our forces, and live a secure and delectable life.

CH. VI.—HOW TEMPTATION AND DELECTATION MAY BE SIN.

1. The princess of whom we have spoken could not hinder the dishonest suit made to her, because, as we have presupposed, it happened to her against her will ; but if, on the contrary she had given encouragement by showing a willingness to correspond with him that tempted her, doubtless she would have been guilty of the suit itself, and though she might dissemble, she would nevertheless deserve blame and punishment. So happens it sometimes that temptation alone brings us into sin, because we are the cause of it. For example, I know that in playing I fall easily into fury and blasphemy, and that gaming serves me as a temptation to those sins ; I sin, therefore, as often as I play, and am guilty of the temptation which shall happen to me in play. Again, if I know certainly that any one's conversation brings me into temptation and danger, and yet I go willingly into it, I am doubtless guilty of all the temptations which I shall receive there.

2. When the delectation which proceeds from the temptation may be avoided, it is always a sin to receive it ; which sin is great or little, according as the pleasure which we take in it, and the consent which we give to it, are great or little, of long or short continuance. It is always a thing reprehensible in the young princess of whom we spake, not only to hearken to the dishonourable proposition made to her, but also after she has heard it, to take pleasure in it,

entertaining her heart with contentment on this object. For although she will not consent to the real execution of what is proposed to her, she consents, notwithstanding, in the interior compliance of her heart, by the contentment which she takes. And it is always dishonesty to apply either heart or body to any dishonest object; nay, dishonesty consists so much in the application of the heart, that without it there can be no sin at all.

3. When you shall then be tempted by any sin, consider whether you have willingly given occasion to the temptation; for then the temptation itself puts you in a state of sin by reason of the hazard to which you have exposed yourself; and that is to be understood when you might commodiously have avoided the occasion, and that you did foresee or might have foreseen the coming of temptation; but if you have given no occasion to the temptation, it can be in no sort imputed to you for a sin.

4. When the delectation following the temptation might have been shunned, and yet has not been avoided, there is always some kind of sin, according to the time we continue, and the cause of the delectation which we have taken in it. A woman, who has given no occasion to be sought, yet takes pleasure therein, ceases not to be blamable if her pleasure is caused solely by her being sought. For example, if the gallant who sues to her plays exactly well upon the lute, and she takes pleasure, not in the attentions he pays, but in the harmony and sweetness of his lute, there is no sin in that; yet she ought not to continue long in this pleasure, for fear she pass from that to a delectation in being sought. Likewise, if any one propound to me some stratagem full of

invention and cunning to take revenge upon mine enemy, and I take no delight in, and give no consent to, the revenge which is proposed, but am pleased only with the subtlety of the invention, without doubt I sin not, though it be not expedient that I continue long in this delight, for fear lest by little and little it might induce me to a delectation in the revenge itself.

5. We are sometimes surprised with some sensation of delectation, which immediately follows the temptation before we are well aware of it; and that can be but a light venial sin which grows greater if, after we perceive the danger we are in, we negligently lose time in considering whether we should admit or reject that delectation; and the sin increases yet more, if being aware of the delectation, we dwell in it some time by mere negligence without any purpose to reject it; but when voluntarily and of set purpose we resolve to please ourselves in that delectation, this very deliberate purpose is a great sin, if the object of the delectation be notoriously evil.

IMITATION—BK. II., CH. XI.—OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE LOVERS OF THE CROSS OF JESUS.

1. Jesus has now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom; but few are willing to bear His cross.

He has many that are desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation.

He finds many companions of His table, but few of His abstinence.

All desire to rejoice with Him; few are willing to suffer with Him.

Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His passion.

Many reverence His miracles, but few follow the ignominy of His cross.

Many love Jesus as long as they meet with no adversity; many praise Him and bless Him, as long as they receive consolations from Him.

But if Jesus hide Himself and leave them for a little while, they either fall into complaints or excessive dejection.

2. But they that love Jesus for Jesus' sake, and not for any comfort of their own, bless Him no less in tribulation and anguish of heart than in the greatest consolation.

And if He should never give them His comfort, yet would they always praise Him, and give Him thanks.

3. Oh! how much is the pure love of Jesus able to do, when it is not mixed with any self-interest or self-love!

Are not all those to be called hirelings, who are always seeking consolation?

Are they not convicted of being rather lovers of themselves than of Christ, who are always thinking of their own profit and gain?

Where shall we find a man that is willing to serve God *gratis*?

4. Seldom do we find any one so spiritual, as to be stripped of all things.

For who shall be able to find the man that is truly poor in spirit, and divested of all affection to all created things? *His value is* (as of things that are brought) *from afar, and from the remotest coasts* (Prov. xxxi. 10).

If a man give his whole substance, it is yet nothing.

And if he do great penance, it is yet little.

And if he attain to all knowledge, he is far off still.

And if he have great virtue, and exceeding fervent devotion, there is still much wanting to him; to wit, one thing, which is chiefly necessary for him.

And what is that? That having left all things else, he leave also himself, and wholly go out of himself, and retain nothing of self-love.

And when he shall have done all things, which he knows should be done, let him think that he has done nothing.

5. Let him not make great account of that which may appear much to be esteemed ; but let him in truth acknowledge himself to be an unprofitable servant : as truth itself has said : *When ye shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants* (Luke xvii. 10).

Then will he be truly poor in spirit, and may say with the prophet, *I am alone and poor* (Ps. xxiv. 16).

Yet no one is indeed richer than such a man, none more powerful, none more free ; who knows how to leave himself and all things, and seat himself in the very lowest place.

BK. III., CH. XXXV.—THAT THERE IS NO BEING SECURE FROM TEMPTATION IN THIS LIFE.

CHRIST.

1. Son, thou art never secure in this life ; but as long as thou livest thou hast always need of spiritual arms.

Thou art in the midst of enemies, and art assaulted on all sides.

If, then, thou dost not now make use of the buckler of patience, thou wilt not be long without a wound.

Moreover, if thou dost not fix thy heart on Me, with a sincere will of suffering all things for My sake, thou canst not support the heat of this warfare, nor attain to the victory of the saints ; it behoveth thee, therefore, to go through all manfully, and to use a strong hand against all things that oppose thee.

For *to him that overcomes is given manna* (Apoc. ii. 17), and to the sluggard is left much misery.

2. If thou seekest rest in this life, how then wilt thou come to rest everlasting ?

Set not thyself to seek for much rest but for much patience.

Seek true peace, not upon earth, but in heaven; not in men, nor in other things created, but in God alone.

Thou must be willing, for the love of God, to suffer all things; labours and sorrows, temptations and vexations, anxieties, necessities, sicknesses, injuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempt.

These things help to obtain virtue, try a novice of Christ, and procure a heavenly crown.

I will give an everlasting reward for this short labour, and glory without end for transitory confusion.

3. Dost thou think to have always spiritual consolations when thou pleasest?

My saints had not so; but met with many troubles, and various temptations, and great desolations.

But they bore all with patience, and confided more in God than in themselves; knowing that the sufferings of this life bear no proportion to the greatness of the glory to come.

Wouldst thou have that immediately which others, after many tears and great labours, have hardly obtained?

Expect the Lord, do manfully, and be of good heart; do not despond, do not fall off, but constantly offer both soul and body for the glory of God.

I will reward thee most abundantly, and will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

BK. I., CH. XXII.—OF THE CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN MISERY.

1. Thou art miserable wherever thou art, and which way soever thou turnest thyself, unless thou turn thyself to God.

Why art thou troubled because things do not succeed with thee, according to thy will and desire?

Who is there that has all things according to his will?

Neither I, nor thou, nor any man upon earth.

There is no man in the world without some trouble or affliction, though he be a king or a pope.

Who is it that is most at ease? doubtless he who is willing to suffer something for God's sake.

2. Many unstable and weak men are apt to say: Behold how well such a one lives; how rich, how great, how mighty and powerful!

But attend to heavenly goods, and thou wilt see that all these temporal things are nothing, but very uncertain, and rather burdensome, because they are never possessed without care and fear.

The happiness of a man consisteth not in having temporal things in abundance, but a moderate competency sufficeth.

It is truly a misery to live upon earth.

The more a man desireth to be spiritual, the more this present life becomes distasteful to him; because he the better understands, and more clearly sees the defects of human corruption.

For to eat, drink, watch, sleep, rest, labour, and to be subject to other necessities of nature, is truly a great misery and affliction to a devout man, who desires to be released and free from all sin.

3. For the *inward* man is very much burdened with the necessities of the body in this world.

And therefore the Prophet devoutly prays to be freed from them, saying: *From my necessities deliver me, O Lord* (Ps. xxiv. 17).

But woe to them that know not their own misery, and more woe to them that love this miserable and corruptible life.

For some there are who love it to that degree, although they can scarce get necessities by labouring or begging, that if they could always live here, they would not care at all for the kingdom of God.

4. O senseless people, and infidels in heart, who lie buried so deep in earthly things as to relish nothing but the things of the flesh!

Miserable wretches! they will in the end find to their cost how vile a nothing that was which they so much loved.

But the saints of God, and all the devout friends of Christ, made no account of what pleased the flesh, or flourished in this life; but their whole hope and intentions aspired to eternal goods.

Their whole desire tended upwards to things everlasting and invisible; for fear lest the love of visible things should draw them down to things below.

Lose not, brother, thy confidence of going forward to spiritual things; there is yet time—the hour is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou put off thy resolution from day to day? Arise and begin this very moment, and say: Now is the time for doing; and now is the time to fight; and now is the proper time to amend my life.

When thou art troubled and afflicted, then is the time to merit. Thou must pass through fire and water, before thou comest to refreshment.

Unless thou do violence to thyself, thou wilt not overcome vice.

As long as we carry about us this frail body, we cannot be without sin, nor live without uneasiness and sorrow.

We would fain be at rest from all misery; but because we have lost innocence by sin, we have also lost true happiness.

We must, therefore, have patience, and wait for the mercy of God, till iniquity pass away, and this mortality be swallowed up by immortal life.

6. Oh! how great is human frailty which is always prone to vice!

To-day thou confessest thy sins, and to-morrow thou again committest what thou hast confessed.

Now thou resolvest to take care, and an hour after thou doest as if thou hadst never resolved.

We have reason, therefore, to humble ourselves, and never to think much of ourselves, since we are so frail and inconstant.

That may also quickly be lost through negligence, which with much labour and time was hardly gotten by grace.

7. What will become of us yet in the end, who grow lukewarm so very soon?

Woe be to us if we are for giving ourselves to rest, as if we had already met with peace and security, when there does not appear any mark of true sanctity in our conversation.

It would be very needful that we should yet again, like good novices, be instructed in all good behaviour, if so, perhaps there would be hopes of some future amendment, and greater spiritual progress.

LESSON XLVI.

Remedies against Great Temptations : That we must resist Small Temptations: How to Overcome them : How in Tribulation we must Invoke God.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak.—Matt. xxvi. 41.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.—Rom. xiii. 14.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul.—1 Pet. ii. 11.

Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No man being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses ; that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself. For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned except he strive lawfully.—2 Tim. ii. 3.

Be sober and watch : because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith : knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.—1 Pet. v. 8.

These words offer you the best remedies against all sorts of temptations. They bid you watch, pray,

practise mortification, avoid occasions, and stand firm in hope and confidence in God. Learn from your two masters how to put them in practice.

INTRODUCTION—PT. IV., CH. VII.—REMEDIES
AGAINST GREAT TEMPTATIONS.

1. As soon as you find yourself in any temptation, do as little children when they see a wolf or a bear in the field; for presently they run into their father's or mother's arms, or at least call them to their help and succour. Run you in like manner to God, imploring His mercy and assistance: it is the remedy which our Saviour Himself taught us, saying, *Pray lest you enter into temptation* (Matt. xxvi. 41). If you find the temptation notwithstanding this to continue or increase, hasten in spirit to embrace the Holy Cross, imagining you see our Saviour Jesus Christ crucified thereon; protest that you will never consent to the temptation, and demand aid against it, and continue always protesting not to consent so long as the temptation shall last.

2. But in making these protestations and refusals of consent, look not the temptation in the face, but look only on our Blessed Saviour; for if you look upon the temptation, principally when it is strong, it may shake your courage. Divert your mind with some good and commendable exercises; for such exercises, entering and taking place in your heart, will chase away the evil temptations and suggestions.

3. The sovereign remedy against all temptations, great or small, is to lay open our heart, and communicate the suggestions, apprehensions, and affections, which we have, to our spiritual director; for, observe well, that the first condition the devil makes

with a soul whom he would seduce is to be silent, as they who would deceive maidens or women, at the very first forbid them to communicate the proposition to their parents or husbands; whereas God, on the other side, in His inspirations requires, above and before all things, that we make them known to our superiors and directors.

4. If, after all this, the temptation continue obstinately to vex and persecute us, we have nothing to do but on our part to persevere as obstinately in our protestation that we will never consent to it; for as maids can never be married so long as they say, No: so the soul, although she may be troubled, yet can never be prejudiced so long as she says, No!

5. Dispute not with your enemy; never answer him one word, unless it be that which our Saviour answered, wherewith He confounded him, *Away, Satan; the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only thou shalt serve* (Matt. iv. 10). A true wife would not answer one word, nor look once in the face of that wicked person who tempted her to dishonesty, but cutting him off short, would at the instant turn her heart towards her husband, and confirm the loyalty which she has vowed to him, without entering into dispute with the other. So the devout soul, assaulted by any temptation, ought by no means to lose time in disputing or answering, but resolutely to turn herself towards Jesus Christ her Spouse, and renew her protestation of fidelity to remain solely and entirely His for ever.

CH. VIII.—THAT WE MUST RESIST SMALL TEMPTATIONS.

1. Although we must fight against great tempta-

tions with an invincible courage, and that the victory gained against them be extremely profitable, yet it may happen that we may profit more in resisting small temptations; for as great temptations exceed in quality, so the lesser infinitely exceed in number, so that the victory over them may be equal to that over the great. Wolves and bears are without doubt more dangerous than flies, yet do they not vex and importune us so much, nor exercise our patience so often. It is an easy thing to abstain from murder, but hard to avoid small choleric passions, of which occasions are presented to us every moment. It is very easy to forbear stealing other men's goods, but hard not so much as to covet or desire them; very easy not to bear false witness in judgment, but uneasy not to lie in conversation; very easy not to be drunk, but hard to be sober; very easy not to desire another man's death, but hard not to desire some inconvenience to him; easy to forbear defaming our adversary, but hard not to despise him.

2. In a word, these little temptations of choler, of suspicion, of jealousy, of envy, of coquetry, of immodesty, of dissimulation, of affection, of cunning, of wrong thoughts, are continual vexations to those who are most devout and resolute. We must therefore prepare ourselves, my dear *Philothea*, with great care and diligence, for this spiritual combat; and assure ourselves that as many victories as we shall win over these enemies, so many precious stones shall be put into the crown of glory which God has prepared for us in heaven. Therefore I say, if we mean to fight valiantly against greater temptations when they come, we must well and diligently defend ourselves against these small and weak assaults.

CH. IX.—REMEDIES AGAINST THESE SMALL TEMPTATIONS.

1. Now concerning these small temptations of vanity, suspicion, anxiety, jealousy, envy, coquetry, and such trifles, which, like flies and gnats, hover before our eyes, and sometimes sting us upon the cheek, sometimes upon the nose, because it is impossible to be altogether free from their importunity, the best resistance we can make is not to vex ourselves for them ; for they cannot hurt us, though they trouble us, so that we be thoroughly resolved to serve God.

2. Despise then petty assaults, and vouchsafe not so much as to think on that which they suggest ; let them buzz about your ears as long as they will, and fly round about you here and there like flies, and when they begin to sting, and that you shall see them alight upon your heart, do nothing, but merely remove them, not fighting against them, nor answering them, but performing some actions contrary to them, whatsoever they are, and especially of the love of God. For, if you will believe me, you shall not strive too much to oppose the virtue contrary to the temptation which you feel, because that would be as it were to dispute with it, but having performed only one action of this same virtue directly contrary to the temptation, if you have had leisure to inform yourself of the quality of the temptation, turn your heart quietly towards Jesus Christ crucified, and by an act of love towards Him kiss His sacred Feet. This is the best means to conquer our enemy as well in little as in great temptations. For the love of God, containing in itself the perfections of all virtues, and far more excellently than the virtues themselves, is also a more

sovereign remedy against all vices; and your soul, accustoming herself in all temptations to recur to this general rendezvous, shall not need to examine what temptations she has, but, feeling herself troubled, will, without further pain, quiet herself by this general remedy, which, besides, is so terrible to our ghostly enemy, that, when he once sees his temptations provoke us to this Divine love, he ceases to raise more. And thus much concerning small and frequent temptations, wherewith whosoever shall trouble himself more particularly shall spend his time without profit.

IMITATION — BK. III., CH. XXIX. — HOW, WHEN
TRIBULATION PRESSETH, WE MUST CALL UPON
AND BLESS GOD.

DISCIPLE.

1. Blessed, O Lord, be Thy name for ever, who hast been pleased that this trial and tribulation should come upon me.

I cannot fly from it, but must of necessity fly to Thee, that Thou mayest help me and turn it to my good.

Lord, I am now in tribulation, and my heart is not at ease: but I am much afflicted with my present suffering.

And now, dear Father, what shall I say? I am taken, Lord, in these straits: Oh, save me from this hour!

But for this reason I came unto this hour, that Thou mightest be glorified when I shall be exceedingly humbled and delivered by Thee.

May it please Thee, O Lord, to deliver me: for, poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without Thee?

Give me patience, O Lord, at this time also.

Help me, O my God, and I will not fear, how much soever I may be oppressed.

2. And now, in the midst of these things, what shall I say? Lord, Thy will be done: I have well deserved to be afflicted and troubled.

I must needs bear it, and would to God it may be with patience, till the storm pass over, and it be better.

But Thy almighty hand is able to take away from me this temptation also, and to moderate its violence as Thou hast often done heretofore for me, lest I quite sink under it, *O my God, my mercy.*

And how much the more difficult this is to me, so much the easier to Thee, is *this change of the right hand of the Most High* (Ps. lxxvi. 11).

LESSON XLVII.

How to strengthen our Hearts against Temptations:
Of the Royal Road of the Holy Cross: Of the
Proof of a True Lover.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would.—Gal. v. 16.

For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; for he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall save it.—Luke ix. 24.

Persevere under discipline. God dealeth with you as with his son: for what son is there, whom the father doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers; then are you bastards, and not sons. Moreover we have had fathers of our flesh, for instructors, and we revered them: shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits, and live?—Heb. xii. 7.

And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ: yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.—Rom. viii. 17.

But he that keepeth his word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected: and by this we know that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.—1 John ii. 5.

These words—1, Teach you to fight by opposing to the desires of the flesh those of the spirit; 2, show

you that the only way to the kingdom prepared by God is through the Cross; 3, declare that God acts as our Father when He sends tribulation and suffering; 4, bid us prove our love not by tasting the consolations of Tabor, but by following in deed the examples our Lord has left us in His life. Practise all this according to the advice here given you by your two masters.

INTRODUCTION—PT. IV., CH. X.—HOW TO STRENGTHEN OUR HEARTS AGAINST TEMPTATIONS.

1. Consider from time to time what passions reign most in your soul, and, having discovered them, take a course of life clean contrary to them in thought, word, and deed. For example, if you find yourself inclined to the passion of vanity, think often on the misery of this mortal life, how anxious those vanities will make our consciences at the hour of our death, how unworthy they are of a generous heart, that they are but trifles and toys for little children, and such like considerations. Speak also earnestly and often against vanity, and, although it seem to be against your heart, cease not to despise it; for by this means you shall in a manner engage yourself in reputation to the contrary virtue, and, by much speaking against a thing, we come to hate it, though at first we loved it. Exercise works of humility and abjection as much as you can, even against your inclination; for so you shall quickly get a habit of humility, and weaken your vanity in such sort as when the temptation shall happen, your inclination will not be able to take part with it, and so you will have more strength to resist it.

2. If you are inclined to covetousness, think often on the folly of this vice, which renders us slaves to

that which was created to serve us. Think how at our death we must forsake all and leave it in the hands of those that will scatter it away, and to whom it may be a cause of ruin and damnation. Speak much against avarice, and praise the contempt of the world; enforce yourself oftentimes to give alms and do works of charity, and let slip some opportunity of gain.

3. If you are inclined to coquetry, think how dangerous this folly is, as well to yourself as to others. Consider what an unworthy thing it is to profane and employ idly the noblest perfection of our soul; how worthy it is to be blamed as extreme lightness of spirit. Speak often in praise of chastity and purity of heart, and conform your actions as near as you can to your discourse, avoiding all fondness and affectation.

4. To be brief, in time of peace, that is, when the temptations of those sins to which you are most subject do not trouble you, make many acts of the contrary virtues; and, if occasions do not present themselves, seek some; for by this means will your heart be armed against future temptations.

IMITATION—BK. II., CH. XII.—OF THE ROYAL ROAD OF THE HOLY CROSS.

1. To many this seems a hard saying: *Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow Jesus* (Matt. xvi. 24).

But it will be much harder to hear that last word: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire* (Matt. xxv. 41).

For they that at present willingly hear and follow the word of the cross, shall not then be afraid of eternal condemnation.

The sign of the cross will be in heaven, when the Lord shall come to judge.

Then all the servants of the cross, who in their lifetime have conformed themselves to Him that was crucified, shall come to Christ their judge with great confidence.

2. Why then art thou afraid to take up thy cross, which leads to a kingdom ?

In the cross is salvation ; in the cross is life ; in the cross is protection from thy enemies.

In the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness ; in the cross is strength of mind ; in the cross is joy of spirit.

In the cross is the height of virtue ; in the cross is the perfection of sanctity.

There is no health of the soul, nor hope of eternal life, but in the cross.

Take up, therefore, thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

He is gone before thee, carrying His cross, and He died for thee upon the cross, that thou mayest also bear thy cross, and love to die on the cross.

Because, if thou die with Him, thou shalt also live with Him ; and if thou art His companion in suffering, thou shalt also partake in His glory.

3. Behold the cross is all, and in dying to thyself all consists ; and there is no other way to life and true internal peace but the way of the holy cross, and of daily mortification.

Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy cross.

Dispose and order all things according as thou wilt, and as seems best to thee, and thou wilt still find something to suffer, either willingly or unwillingly, and so thou shalt still find the cross.

For either thou shalt feel pain in the body, or sustain in thy soul tribulation of spirit.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be left by God, other times thou shalt be afflicted by thy neighbour ; and what is more thou shalt often be a trouble to thyself.

Neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort, but as long as it shall please God thou must bear it.

For God would have thee to learn to suffer tribulation without comfort, and wholly to submit thyself to Him, and to become more humble by tribulation.

No man hath so lively a feeling of the passion of Christ as he who hath happened to suffer such like things.

The cross, therefore, is always ready, and everywhere waits for thee.

Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou runnest; for whithersoever thou goest, thou carriest thyself with thee, and shalt always find thyself.

Turn thyself upwards, or turn thyself downwards; turn thyself without, or turn thyself within thee, and everywhere thou shalt find the cross.

And everywhere thou must of necessity have patience if thou desirest inward peace, and wouldst merit an eternal crown.

5. If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee, and bring thee to thy desired end; to wit, to that place where there will be an end to suffering, though here there will be no end.

If thou carry it unwillingly, thou makest it a burden to thee, and loadest thyself the more; and nevertheless thou must bear it.

If thou fling away one cross, without doubt thou wilt find another, and perhaps a heavier.

6. Dost thou think to escape that which no mortal could ever avoid? What saint was there ever in the world without his cross and afflictions?

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not one hour of His life without suffering: *Thus it behoved*, saith He, *Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day* (Luke xxiv. 46).

And how dost thou pretend to seek another way than this royal way, which is the way of the holy cross?

7. The whole life of Christ was a cross, and a martyrdom ; and dost thou seek rest and joy ?

Thou errest, if thou seekest any other thing than to suffer tribulation ; for this whole mortal life is full of miseries and beset on all sides with crosses.

And the higher a person is advanced in spirit the heavier crosses shall he often meet with ; because the pain of his banishment increases in proportion to his love.

8. Yet this man, thus many ways afflicted, is not without some alloy of comfort for his ease, because he is sensible of the great profit which he reaps by bearing the cross.

For whilst he willingly resigns himself to it, all the burden of tribulation is converted into an assured hope of comfort from God.

And the more the flesh is brought down by affliction, the more the spirit is strengthened by inward grace ;

And sometimes gains such strength through affection to tribulation and adversity, by reason of loving to be conformable to the cross of Christ, as not to be willing to be without suffering and affliction ; because such a one believes himself by so much the more acceptable to God, as he shall be able to bear more and greater things for him.

This is not the work of a man, but the grace of Christ, which can and does effect such great things in frail flesh ; and what it naturally abhors and flies, even this, through fervour of spirit, it now embraces and loves.

9. To bear the cross, to love the cross, to chastise the body, and bring it under subjection ; to fly honours, to be willing to suffer reproaches, to despise one's self, and wish to be despised ; to bear all adversities and losses, and to desire no prosperity in this world, is not according to man's natural inclination.

If thou lookest to thyself, thou canst do nothing of this of thyself.

But if thou confidest in the Lord, strength will be given thee from heaven, and the world and the flesh shall be made subject to thee.

Neither shalt thou fear thine enemy, the devil, if thou art armed with faith, and signed with the cross of Christ.

10. Set thyself, then, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to bear manfully the cross of thy Lord, crucified for the love of thee.

Prepare thyself to suffer many adversities and divers evils in this miserable life; for so it will be with thee, wherever thou art, and so indeed wilt thou find it, wheresoever thou hide thyself.

It must be so, and there is no remedy against tribulation and sorrow but to bear them patiently.

Drink of the chalice of thy Lord lovingly, if thou desirest to be His friend, and to have part with Him.

Leave consolations to God to do with them as best pleaseth Him.

But prepare thou thyself to bear tribulations, and account them the greatest consolations, for the sufferings of this life bear no proportion with the glory to come, even if thou alone couldst suffer them all.

11. When thou shalt arrive thus far, that tribulation becomes sweet and savoury to thee for the love of Christ, then think that it is well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth.

As long as suffering seems grievous to thee, and thou seekest to fly from it, so long will it be ill with thee, and the tribulation from which thou fliest will everywhere follow thee.

12. If thou set thyself to what thou oughtest, that is, to suffer and die to thyself, it will quickly be better for thee, and thou shalt find peace.

Although thou should have been rapt up to the third heaven, with St. Paul, thou art not thereby secured that thou shalt suffer no adversity. *I, said Jesus, will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake (Acts ix. 16).*

198 LESSON XLVII. ROYAL ROAD OF THE CROSS.

To suffer, therefore, is what waits for thee, if thou wilt love Jesus, and constantly serve Him.

13. Would to God thou wert worthy to suffer something for the name of Jesus! How great a glory would be laid up for thee, how great joy would it be to all the saints of God, and how great edification to thy neighbour?

All recommend patience; but alas! how few are there that desire to suffer!

With good reason oughtest thou willingly to suffer a little for Christ, since many suffer greater things for the world.

14. Know for certain that thou must lead a dying life; and the more a man dies to himself, the more he begins to live to God.

No man is fit to comprehend heavenly things, who has not resigned himself to suffer adversities for Christ.

Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more wholesome for thee in this world, than to suffer willingly for Christ.

And if thou wert to choose, thou oughtest to wish rather to suffer adversities for Christ than to be delighted with many comforts; because thou wouldst thus be more like to Christ, and more conformable to all the saints.

For our merit and the advancement of our state consists not in having many sweetnesses and consolations, but rather in bearing great afflictions and tribulations.

15. If, indeed, there had been anything better, and more beneficial to man's salvation than suffering, Christ certainly would have shown it by word and example.

For he manifestly exhorts both his disciples that followed Him, and all that desire to follow Him, to bear the cross, saying, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me* (Luke ix. 23). So that when we have read

and searched all, let this be the final conclusion, that *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God* (Acts xiv. 21).

BK. III., CH. VI.—OF THE PROOF OF A TRUE LOVER.

CHRIST. 1. My son, thou art not as yet a valiant and prudent lover.

DISCIPLE. 2. Why, O Lord?

CHRIST. 3. Because thou fallest off from what thou hast begun upon meeting with a little adversity, and too greedily seekest after consolation.

A valiant lover stands his ground in temptations, and yields not to the crafty persuasions of the enemy.

As he is pleased with Me in prosperity, so I displease him not when I send adversity.

4. A prudent lover considers not so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver.

He looks more at the good will than the value, and prizes his Beloved above all his gifts.

A generous lover rests not in the gift, but in Me above every gift.

All is not lost, if sometimes thou hast not that sense of devotion towards Me or My saints which thou wouldst have.

That good and delightful affection which thou sometimes perceivest, is the effect of present grace, and a certain foretaste of thy heavenly country.

But thou must not rely too much upon it, because it goes and comes.

But to fight against the evil motions of the mind which arise, and to despise the suggestions of the devil is a sign of virtue and of great merit.

5. Let not, therefore, strange fancies trouble thee, of what kind soever they be that are suggested to thee.

Keep thy resolution firm, and thy intention upright towards God.

Neither is it an illusion, that sometimes thou art rapt into an ecstasy, and presently returnest to the accustomed weaknesses of thy heart.

For these thou rather sufferest against thy will than procurest; and as long as thou art displeased with them, and resistest them, it is merit and not loss.

6. Know that the old enemy strives by all means to hinder thy desire after good, and to divert thee from every devout exercise; namely from the veneration of the saints, from the pious meditation of My passion; from the profitable remembrance of thy sins, from keeping a guard upon thy own heart, and from a firm purpose of advancing in virtue.

He suggests to thee many evil thoughts, that he may weary thee out, and frighten thee; that he may withdraw thee from prayer and the reading of devout books.

He is displeased with humble *confession*; and, if he could, he would cause thee to let alone *communion*.

Give no credit to him, value him not, although he often lays his deceitful snares in the way.

Charge him with it, when he suggests wicked and unclean things; and say to him:

Begone, unclean spirit; be ashamed, miserable wretch; thou art very filthy indeed to suggest such things as these to me.

Depart from me, thou wicked impostor, thou shalt have no share in me, but my Jesus will be with me as a valiant warrior, and thou shalt be confounded.

I had rather die, and undergo any torment whatsoever, than yield to thy suggestions.

Be silent, I will hear no more of thee, although thou so often strive to be troublesome to me.

The Lord is my light, and my salvation: whom shall I fear? (Ps. xxvi. 1.)

If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear (Ps. xxvi. 3). The Lord is my helper and my Redeemer (Ps. xviii. 15).

7. Fight like a good soldier; and if sometimes thou fall through frailty, rise up again with greater strength than before, confiding in My more abundant grace; but take great care thou yield not to any vain complacency and pride.

Through this many are led into error, and sometimes fall into incurable blindness.

Let this fall of the proud, who foolishly rely on their own strength, serve thee for a warning, and keep thee always humble.

(O Christian souls! why search elsewhere for instructions how to overcome temptations, relieve interior mental anguish, pursue the path of holiness courageously, and recognise the secret and mysterious ways by which God wills to raise His servants from what is human to what is supernatural and divine? At the foot of your crucifixes, humble and reverent, when in tribulation and affliction, read and re-read this Lesson. It will be a salve to your wound. Patiently make trial of this most precious remedy, and you will find herein such virtue and efficacy that you will exclaim, like the people of Samaria, *We ourselves have heard*, and we know that these our Masters are true disciples of the Saviour of the world, and are animated with His spirit.)

LESSON XLVIII.

Of Unquietness: Of Sadness: Of Asking the Divine Assistance, and of Confidence of Recovering Grace.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

And that you use your endeavour to be quiet, and that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you.—1 Thess. iv. 11.

And they indeed for a few days according to their own pleasure instructed us; but he, for our profit, that we might receive his sanctification. Now all chastisement for the present indeed seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow; but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees. And make straight steps with your feet: that no one, halting, may go out of the way; but rather be healed.—Heb. xii. 10.

Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.—Heb. iv. 16.

These words—1, Teach you to avoid unquietness and natural sadness, which assail the progress of the soul; 2, they indicate the causes of sadness and the remedies; 3, they show you an excellent way of taking refuge with God when these feelings disturb you, and how to conquer them, and obtain the consolations of Divine grace. Now note well the advice of your masters.

INTRODUCTION—PT. IV., CH. XI.—OF UNQUIETNESS.

1. Unquietness is not a simple temptation, but a spring from which, and by which, many other temptations are derived. I will then speak something of it. Sadness is nothing but a sorrow of mind, conceived for some inconvenience which we suffer against our will, whether it be outward, as poverty, sickness, contempt; or inward, as ignorance, want of devotion, repugnance, temptation. When the soul then finds that she has some disease, she is grieved at it, and that is sadness; and presently she desires to be freed from it, and to find means to disburden herself; and so far she is right, for we naturally desire that which is good, and fly from that which we believe to be evil. If the soul seeks means to be freed from this evil for the love of God, she will seek them with patience, meekness, humility, and tranquillity, expecting her deliverance more from the providence and goodness of God than from her own industry, labour and diligence. But if she desires ease for love of herself, then will she heat and tire herself in seeking those means of her deliverance; as though this blessing depended more on herself than on God. I say not that she thinks so, but that she vexes herself as if she thought so. And if she meet not suddenly with that which she desires, then she falls into great unquietness and impatience, which not curing, but rather increasing the former disease, the soul enters into anguish, distress, and such faintness, and loss of all courage, that she grows desperate of her cure. You see then that sadness, which in the beginning was just, afterwards begets unquietness, and unquietness an increase of sadness, which is extremely dangerous.

2. Unquietness is the greatest evil that can come to the soul excepting sin. For as seditious and civil discords of a commonwealth ruin it entirely, and disable it to resist a stranger, so our heart, being troubled and disquieted in itself, loses strength to maintain the virtues it had gained, and with it the means to resist the temptations of the enemy, who at that time uses all kinds of endeavours to fish, as they say, in troubled waters.

3. Unquietness proceeds from an inordinate desire to be delivered from the evil we suffer, or to obtain the good we desire. And yet nothing more increases the evil nor hinders the good than unquietness and vexation. Birds remain taken in the nets and snares, because finding themselves encaged, they flutter and strive to get loose, and by that means entangle themselves the more. When you shall, then, earnestly desire to be freed from any evil or to obtain any good, first set your mind at rest and at peace, and settle your judgment and will, and then fairly and softly endeavour to accomplish your desire, taking in order the means which shall be convenient for it. And when I say fair and softly, I mean not negligently, but without vexation, trouble, and unquietness; otherwise, instead of obtaining the effect of your desire, you will spoil all, and more entangle yourself.

4. *My soul is always in my hand, O Lord, and I have not forgotten Thy law*, says David (Ps. cxviii. 109). Examine more than once every day, at least morning and evening, whether your soul be in your hands, or whether some passion or unquietness has not robbed you of it. Consider whether you have your heart at command, or whether it be not escaped out of your hands to engage itself in some inordinate affection

of love, hatred, envy, covetousness, fear, joy, sadness ; and if it is strayed, seek it presently, and bring it back gently to the presence of God, subjecting your affections and desires to the obedience and direction of His Divine pleasure. For as they that fear to lose anything which is precious to them keep it fast in their hand ; so, in imitation of this great King, we should always say, O my God, my soul is in danger, and therefore I carry it always in my hand ; in this manner I have not forgotten Thy holy law.

5. Permit not your desires, be they never so little, or of never so small importance, to disquiet you ; for after little ones, those that are greater and more important will find your heart more disposed to trouble or disorder. When you perceive unquietness to come, commend yourself to God, and resolve to do nothing at all of that which your desire demands, until that disquiet be entirely passed, unless it be something that cannot be deferred ; and then you must, by some gentle and quiet means, stop the current of your affection, tempering and moderating it as much as is possible ; and then do that which is required, not according to your desire, but according to reason.

6. If you can discover your unquietness to him that governs your soul, or at least to some trusty and devout friend, doubt not but presently you shall find redress ; for communicating of the griefs of our heart works the same effect in the soul that letting blood does in the body of him who is in a continual fever, and this is the remedy of remedies. So holy *King Louis* gave this counsel to his son : *If thou hast any trouble in thy heart, tell it presently to thy Confessor, or to some good friend, and thou shalt bear thy grief very easily by the comfort he will give thee.*

CH. XII.—OF SADNESS.

1. *Sadness that is according to God*, saith *St. Paul*, *worketh repentance to salvation, but sadness of the world worketh death* (2 Cor. vii. 10). Sadness, then, may be good or evil, according to the sundry effects which it works in us. It is true that it produces more evil than good effects; for it has but two that are good, mercy and repentance, and six that are evil, anxiety, sloth, indignation, jealousy, envy, and impatience; which caused the Wise Man to say, *Sorrow kills many, and there is no profit in it* (Eccles. xxx. 25); because, for two good streams which flow from the spring of sadness, there are six very evil.

2. The enemy makes use of sadness to exercise his temptations against the just; for, as he endeavours to make the wicked rejoice in their sins, so he labours to make the good sorrowful in their good works; and as he can never procure evil to be committed but by making it seem pleasant, so can he not divert us from goodness but by making it appear unpleasant. He takes delight in sadness and melancholy, because he is so himself, and so shall be eternally, therefore he desires that every one should be like himself.

3. This mischievous sadness troubles the soul, puts it into disquiet, brings inordinate fears, gives a distaste of prayer, dulls the brain, deprives the soul of counsel, resolution, judgment, and courage, and ruins her strength: to be short, it is like a hard winter that mows away all living creatures; for it ravishes all sweetness from the soul, and renders her lame and impotent in all her powers. If you chance to be assaulted with this dangerous sadness, *Philothea*, practise the remedies following:—

4. *Is any one sad*, says *St. James*, *let him pray*. Prayer is a sovereign remedy, for it lifts up the soul to God, who is our only joy and consolation; but in praying use affections and words, either inward or outward, which tend to confidence and the love of God; as, *O God of mercy, most bountiful God, my sweet Saviour, O God of my heart, my joy, my hope, my dear Spouse, the Well-Beloved of my soul*, and such like.

5. Resist vigorously the inclinations of sadness, and although it seems to you that all you do at that time is performed coldly, heavily, and loosely, yet omit nothing of it; for the enemy who intends to make us weary of good works by sadness, seeing that we cease not to do them, and that, being done with repugnance, they are more meritorious, forbears to afflict us any more.

6. Sing spiritual songs, for the devil has often ceased his endeavours by this means. Witness the evil spirit that afflicted or possessed *Saul*, whose violence was repressed by such singing. It is good to busy ourselves in exterior employments, and vary them as much as we can, so to divert our mind from the sad object, to purify and heat the spirits; sadness being a passion of a dry and cold complexion.

7. Perform external actions of love, although without delight, embracing the crucifix, holding it close to your breast, kissing the feet and hands, lifting your hands and eyes to heaven, ejaculating aloud to God by such words of love and confidence as follow *My Well-Beloved is mine, and I am His* (Cant. ii. 16). *My Well-Beloved is a posie of myrrh; He shall dwell between my breasts* (Cant. i. 12). *Mine eyes melt into tears to Thee, O my God, saying, When wilt Thou comfort me?* (Ps. cxviii. 82). *O Jesus, be Jesus to me! Live,*

sweet Jesus, and my soul will live. Who can separate me from the love of God? (Rom. viii. 35) and such like.

8. Moderate disciplines are good against sadness, because this voluntary outward affliction obtains inward consolation, and the soul, feeling pain from without, diverts herself from those which are within. Frequent Holy Communion is also excellent; for that Heavenly Bread strengthens the heart and rejoices the spirit.

9. Discover all apprehensions, affections, and suggestions, which proceed from your sadness, humbly and faithfully to your guide and Confessor. Seek the company of spiritual persons, and frequent them as much as you can during the time of your sadness; and, last of all, resign yourself into the hands of God, preparing yourself to suffer this troublesome sadness patiently, as a just punishment of your vain mirth and pastimes, and doubt not at all but God, after He shall have tried you, will deliver you from this evil.

IMITATION—BK. III., CH. XXX.—OF ASKING THE
DIVINE ASSISTANCE, AND OF CONFIDENCE OF
RECOVERING GRACE.

CHRIST.

1. Son, I am the Lord, who gives strength in the day of tribulation.

Come to Me when it is not well with thee.

This is that which most of all hinders heavenly comfort, that thou art slow in turning thyself to prayer.

For, before thou earnestly prayest to Me thou seekest, in the meantime, many comforts, and delightest thyself in outward things.

And hence it comes to pass that all things avail thee little, till thou take notice that I am He who

delivers those that trust in Me. Nor is there out of Me any powerful help, nor profitable counsel, nor lasting remedy.

But now, having recovered spirits after the storm, grow thou strong again in the light of My tender mercies: for I am at hand to repair all, not only to the full, but even with abundance and above measure.

2. Is anything difficult to Me? or shall I be like one that promises and does not perform?

Where is thy faith? Stand firmly, and with perseverance.

Have patience, and be of good courage; comfort will come to thee in its proper season.

Wait for me, wait, I will come and cure thee.

It is a temptation that troubles thee, and a vain fear that affrights thee.

What does that solicitude about future accidents bring thee, but only sorrow upon sorrow? *Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof* (Matt. vi. 34).

It is a vain and unprofitable thing to conceive either grief or joy for future things which perhaps will never happen.

3. But it is incident to man to be deluded with such imaginations; and a sign of a soul that is as yet weak, to be so easily drawn away by the suggestions of the enemy.

For he cares not whether it be with things true or false that he abuses and deceives thee: whether he overthrow thee with love of things present, or the fear of things to come.

Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, and let it not fear.

Believe in Me, and trust in My mercy.

When thou thinkest I am far from thee, I am often nearest to thee.

When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes it is that thou art in the way of the greatest gain of merit.

All is not lost when anything falls out otherwise than thou wouldst have it.

Thou must not judge according to thy present feeling; nor give thyself up in such manner to any trouble, from whencesoever it comes; nor take it so, as if all hope were gone of being delivered out of it.

4. Think not thyself wholly forsaken, although for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn from thee the comfort which thou desirest; for this is the way to the kingdom of heaven.

And without doubt it is more expedient for thee and for the rest of My servants, that thou be exercised by adversities than that thou shouldst have all things according to thy inclination.

I know thy secret thoughts, I know that it is very expedient for thy soul that thou shouldst sometimes be left without consolation, lest thou shouldst be puffed up with good success, and shouldst take a complaisance in thyself, imagining thyself to be what thou art not.

What I have given I can justly take away, and restore it again when I please.

5. When I give it, it is still Mine; when I take it away again I take not anything that is thine; for *every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above* (James i. 17).

If I send thee afflictions, or any adversity, repine not; neither let thy heart be cast down.

I can quickly raise thee up again, and turn all thy burden into joy.

Nevertheless, I am just, and greatly to be praised, when I deal thus with thee.

6. If thou thinkest rightly and considerest things in truth, thou oughtest never to be so much dejected and troubled for any adversity.

But rather to rejoice and give thanks: yea, to account this as a special subject of joy, that afflicting thee with sorrows, I do not spare thee.

As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you (John xv. 9), said I to my beloved disciples, whom certainly I did not send to temporal joys, but to great conflicts; not to honours, but to contempt; not to idleness, but to labour; not to rest, but to bring forth much fruit in patience. Remember these words, O my son!

LESSON XLIX.

Of Spiritual and Sensible Consolations, and how we must Behave Ourselves in them: Of Gratitude for the Grace of God: That Man hath no Good of himself, and that he cannot Glory in anything.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content therewith. I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound (everywhere, and in all things I am instructed): both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.—Phil. iv. 11.

In all things give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all.—1 Thess v. 18.

I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me.—1 Cor. xv. 9.

What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?—1 Cor. iv. 7.

These words teach—1, That amid the vicissitudes of this life your aim and purpose should be not to cling more to what is pleasant than to what is unpleasant, but, with submission to the Divine will, to make use of both; 2, that you should at all times give thanks to

God ; 3, that you should never fail to discern what is His and what is yours. Each master has hereon an instruction for you.

INTRODUCTION—PT. IV., CH. XIII.—OF SPIRITUAL
AND SENSIBLE CONSOLATIONS, AND HOW WE
MUST BEHAVE OURSELVES IN THEM.

1. God continues the existence of this great world in a perpetual vicissitude, by which day is changed into night, night into day, spring into summer, summer into autumn, autumn into winter, winter into spring again. And one day is never perfectly like another ; some are cloudy, some rainy, some dry, some windy ; a variety which gives exceeding beauty to the world. It is the same with man, who according to the saying of the ancients, is an abridgment of the world, or another little world. For he is never in the same estate ; his life glides upon the earth like the waters, floating and waving in a perpetual diversity of motion, which sometimes exalt him with hope, sometimes humble him with fear, sometimes carry him to the right hand with consolations, sometimes to the left with afflictions, and not one of his days, no, not one of his hours, is in all points like another.

2. This is a necessary admonition, that we must endeavour to have a continual and inviolable equality of heart in so great an inequality of occurrences. And although all things turn and change variously about us, yet must we stand constantly immovable, always looking and aspiring towards our God. Let the ship take what course soever, let it sail towards the east, west, north, or south, what wind soever carries it, never will the needle of the compass look any other way than towards its fair Pole star. Let all

turn upside down, not only round about us, but even within us, that is, let our soul be sorrowful or joyful, let it be in sweetness or bitterness, in peace or trouble, in light or darkness, in temptation or repose, in pleasure or displeasure, barren or fruitful, let the sun burn it or the dew refresh it, yet always must the needle of our heart, our mind, our superior will, which is our compass, look incessantly and tend continually towards the love of God, our Creator, Saviour, and only Sovereign Good. *Whether we live or die*, says the Apostle, *we belong to God* (Rom. xiv. 8.); and, *Who shall be able to separate us from the love of God?* (Rom. viii. 35). No, nothing shall ever separate us from this love, neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor death, nor life, nor present pains, nor the fear of future accidents, nor the subtlety of evil spirits, nor the height of consolations, nor the depth of afflictions, nor fruitfulness, nor barrenness of heart, ought ever to separate us from this holy charity founded in Christ Jesus.

3. This absolute resolution never to forsake God, or abandon His sweet love, serves as a counterpoise to our souls, to keep them in a holy indifference amidst the inequality of divers motions which the condition of this life brings them. For as little bees, surprised by the wind in the fields, embrace small stones, that they may be able to balance themselves in the air, and not be so easily abandoned to the mercy of the storm, so our soul, having by resolution vigorously embraced the precious love of God, continues constant in the midst of the inconstancy and mutability of consolations and afflictions, as well spiritual as temporal, interior as exterior. But, besides this general doctrine, we have need of some particular documents.

4. I say, then, that devotion consists not in the gentleness, softness, comfort, or sensible tenderness of the heart, which provokes us to tears and sighs, and gives us a kind of delight and savoury satisfaction in some spiritual exercises. No, dear *Philothea*, devotion and that are not the same thing, for many souls have this tenderness and consolation who, nevertheless, are very vicious, and consequently have not any true love of God, much less any true devotion. *Saul*, persecuting to death poor *David*, who fled from him into the wilderness of Engaddi, entered all alone into a cave where *David* and his people lay hidden. *David*, who on this occasion might have killed *Saul* a thousand times, spared his life, and would not so much as put him in fear, but having suffered him to go forth at his pleasure, called after him to declare his innocency, and to let him know that he had been at his mercy. Now hereupon what did *Saul* leave undone to show that his heart was mollified towards *David*? He called him his child, wept out aloud, praised him, confessed his meekness, prayed to God for him, foretold his future greatness, and commended his posterity to him. What greater sweetness and tenderness of heart could he make show of? And yet for all that he had not changed his heart, neither did he cease to persecute *David* as cruelly as before. So there are some persons, who, considering the goodness of God and the Passion of our Saviour, feel great tenderness of heart, which forces them to sigh, to weep, pray, and give thanks with such sensibility as that one would say their hearts were possessed with deep devotion; but when this comes to the proof we find that, as the sudden showers of a hot summer,

falling in great drops upon the earth and not piercing it, serve for nothing but to produce mushrooms, even so these tears and this tenderness, falling upon a vicious heart, and piercing it not, become altogether unprofitable. For notwithstanding all this, these poor souls part not from a farthing of their evil-gotten goods, renounce not one of their perverse affections, nor will they suffer the least inconvenience in the world for the service of our Saviour, for whose sake they wept. So that the good motions which they have had, are nothing but spiritual mushrooms, which are not only no true devotion, but oftentimes great subtleties of the devil, who, entertaining souls with these poor consolations, makes them rest contented and satisfied with them, lest they should search further for true and solid devotion, which consists in a will constant, resolute, active, and ready to put in execution whatsoever they know to be acceptable to God.

5. A child will weep tenderly when he sees his mother pricked with a lancet to be let blood; but if his mother at the same time demand his apple or sugar-plums which he has in his hand, he will by no means let them go. Such are the most part of our tender devotions. Seeing the stroke of the lance which pierced the Heart of our Saviour crucified, we weep bitterly. Alas! *Philothea*, it is well done to lament this painful death and Passion of our Father and Redeemer, but why then do we not give Him in good earnest the apple which we have in our hands and which he demands so earnestly, that is, our heart, the only apple of love which our dear Saviour requires of us? Why do we not resign so many petty affections, delectations, and pleasures, which He would pull out

of our hands and cannot, because they are our sugar-plums, of which we are more fond than desirous of heavenly grace? Ah! *Philothea*, these are the friendships of little children, tender but weak, fantastical and fruitless. Devotion then consists not in such tender and sensible affections, which sometimes proceed from a pliant nature, capable of any impression that shall be given it, and sometimes from the enemy, who, to amuse us, stirs up our imagination to an apprehension fit for such effects.

6. Yet these soft and tender affections are sometimes very good and profitable, for they provoke the appetite of the soul, strengthen the spirit, and add to the rigour of devotion a holy mirth and cheerfulness, which renders our actions good and acceptable, even in the exterior. This satisfaction taken in heavenly things is that which made *David* cry out, *O Lord, how sweet are Thy words to my taste; they are sweeter than honey to my mouth* (Ps. cxviii. 103). And certainly the least consolation of devotion which we receive is worth all the most excellent recreations of the world. *The breasts and the milk* (Cant. i. 1), that is, the favours of the Heavenly Spouse, are sweeter to the soul than the most precious wine of earthly pleasures. He that once has tasted them, esteems all other consolations but gall and wormwood. As they who hold sweet-root in their mouth receive such a sweetness from it that they feel neither hunger nor thirst, so they to whom God has given this heavenly manna of internal consolations can neither desire nor receive the contentments of the world, at least to take pleasure and entertain their affections in them. They are little foretastes of the immortal delights which God gives to souls that seek Him; they are the sugar-

plums which He gives to His little children to gain them; they are cordial waters which He gives to strengthen them; and sometimes they are also pledges of eternal rewards.

7. They say that *Alexander* the Great, sailing in the main sea, first discovered *Arabia Felix* by the smell of the sweet odours which the wind brought him, and thereupon took great courage, he and his companions; so oftentimes we receive these pleasures and sweetnesses in the sea of this mortal life, which doubtless make us guess at the delights of the happy country of heaven, to which we all tend and aspire.

8. But you will say: Since there are sensible consolations which are good and come from God, and nevertheless there are others unprofitable, dangerous, yea, pernicious, which proceed either from nature or from the enemy, how shall I discern the one from the other and know those evil or unprofitable from those that are good? It is a general doctrine, *Philothea*, for all the passions and affections of our souls, that we must know them by their fruits; our hearts are trees; the affections and passions are the branches; works or actions are the fruits. The heart is good that has good affections, and the affections and passions are good which bring forth in us good effects and holy actions. If this softness, this tenderness, and these consolations make us more humble, patient, tractable, charitable, and compassionate towards our neighbour, more fervent in mortifying our concupiscence and evil inclinations, more constant in our exercises, more meek and pliable to those whom we ought to obey, more sincere in our lives, then without doubt they are from God; but if these sweetnesses have no other contentment than for ourselves,

if they make us curious, peevish, stubborn, fierce, presumptuous, severe towards our neighbours, and esteeming ourselves already little saints, disdaining to be any more subject to direction, doubtless they are false and pernicious consolations. A good tree brings forth none but good fruits.

9. When we shall have these tendernesses and consolations, we must humble ourselves profoundly before God, and let us take heed of saying, by reason of these comforts: *O how good am I!* No, *Philothea*; these are good things that make us nothing at all the better; for, as I have said, devotion consists not in them, but let us say: *O how good is God to such as hope in Him, to the soul that seeks Him* (Lament. iii. 25). 1. He that hath sugar in his mouth cannot say that his mouth is sweet, but he can well say that the sugar is sweet; so though the spiritual sweetness be very good, and though God who gives it to us is most good, yet it follows not that he who receiveth it is good. 2. Let us acknowledge that we are still little children who have need of milk; that these sugar-plums are given us because our spirit is yet tender and delicate, and has need of baits and allurements to be enticed to the love of God. 3. But after this, speaking generally and ordinarily, let us receive these graces and favours, humbly esteeming them exceeding precious, not so much because they are so in themselves, as because it is the hand of God which infuses them into our hearts, as a loving mother would do, who, to pet her child, puts sugar-plums into his mouth with her own hand, one by one; for if the child had wit, he would care more for the sweetness of his mother's fondling and caresses than for the sweetness of the sugar-plums themselves.

So it is much, *Philothea*, to have these sweetnesses ; but it is sweetness above all sweetness to consider that God with His loving and tender hand, like a mother, puts them into our mouth, into our heart, into our soul, and into our mind. 4. Having thus received them humbly, let us employ them carefully, according to the intention of the Giver. Wherefore, think we, does God bestow this sweetness upon us ? To make us sweet towards every one, and loving towards Himself. The mother gives sugar-plums to her child to make him kiss her ; let us then kiss our Blessed Saviour, who gives us so much sweetness. Now to kiss our Saviour is to obey Him, to keep His commandments, to do His will, to follow His desires, in a word, to embrace Him tenderly with obedience and loyalty. When, therefore, we shall receive any spiritual consolation, we must that day render ourselves more diligent in good works and humility.

10. Besides all this, we must from time to time renounce such sweetness, tenderness, and consolations, separating our heart from them, and protesting that although we accept them humbly, and esteem them because God sends them, and because they provoke us to His love, yet it is not them that we seek, but God and His holy love, not the comforts, but the Comforter, not the sweetness, but the sweet Saviour, not the tenderness, but Him who is the sweetness of heaven and earth ; and in this affection we ought to dispose ourselves to persevere constantly in the holy love of God, although in all our life we should never taste of any consolation, and to say, as well upon *Mount Calvary* as upon *Mount Thabor*, *O Lord, it is good for me to be with Thee*, be Thou upon the Cross, or be Thou in glory. 6. To conclude, I admonish

you that, if there shall happen to you any great quantity of such consolations, tenderness, tears, and sweetness, or any extraordinary thing in them, you confer sincerely with your spiritual conductor, and learn how to moderate and behave yourself in them; for it is written, *Hast thou found honey? eat but as much of it as is sufficient* (Prov. xxv. 16).

IMITATION—BK. II., CH. X.—OF GRATITUDE FOR THE GRACE OF GOD.

1. Why seekest thou rest, since thou art born to labour?

Dispose thyself to patience, rather than consolation; and to bear the cross, rather than to rejoice.

For who is there amongst worldly people that would not willingly receive comfort and spiritual joy, if he could always have it?

For spiritual consolations exceed all the delights of the world, and pleasures of the flesh.

For all worldly delights are either vain or filthy; but spiritual delights alone are pleasant and honest, springing from virtue, and infused by God into pure minds.

But these divine consolations no man can always enjoy when he will: because the time of temptation is not long away.

2. But what very much oppose these heavenly visits are a false liberty of mind, and a great confidence in one's self.

God doth well in giving the grace of consolation; but man does ill in not returning it all to God, with thanksgiving.

And this is the reason why the gifts of grace cannot flow in us: because we are ungrateful to the Giver; nor do we return all to the fountain head.

For grace will always be given to him that duly returns thanks: and what is wont to be given to the humble will be taken away from the proud.

3. I would not have any such consolation as should rob me of compunction: nor do I wish to have such contemplation as leads to pride.

For all that is high is not holy; nor all that is pleasant good; nor every desire pure; nor is everything that is dear to us pleasing to God.

I willingly accept of that grace which always makes me more humble and fearful, and more ready to forsake myself.

He that has been taught by the gift of grace, and instructed by the scourge of the withdrawing of it, will not dare to attribute anything of good to himself; but will rather acknowledge himself to be poor and naked.

Give to God what is His, and take to thyself what is thine; that is, give thanks to God for His grace; but as to thyself, be sensible that nothing is to be attributed to thee but sin, and the punishment due to sin.

4. Put thyself always in the lowest place, and the highest shall be given to thee; for the highest stands not without the lowest.

The saints that are highest in the sight of God are the least in their own eyes; and the more glorious they are, the more humble they are in themselves.

Being full of the truth and heavenly glory, they are not desirous of vain-glory.

They that are grounded and established in God, can by no means be proud.

And they that attribute to God all whatsoever good they have received, seek not glory from one another, but that glory which is from God alone; and desire above all things that God may be praised in themselves, and in all the saints, and to this same they always tend.

5. Be grateful, then, for the least, and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater things.

Let the least be unto thee as something very great, and the most contemptible as a special favour.

If thou considerest the dignity of the giver ; no gift will seem to thee little, which is given by so great a God.

Yea, though He give punishment and stripes, it ought to be acceptable ; for whatever He suffers to befall us, He always does it for our salvation.

He that desires to retain the grace of God, let him be thankful for grace when it is given, and patient when it is withdrawn.

Let him pray, that it may return ; let him be cautious and humble, lest he lose it.

BK. III., CH. XL.—THAT MAN HATH NO GOOD OF HIMSELF, AND THAT HE CANNOT GLORY IN ANYTHING.

DISCIPLE.

1. *Lord what is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man that Thou vouchsafest to visit him ? (Ps. viii. 5).*

What hath man deserved that thou shouldst give him Thy grace.

Lord, what cause have I to complain, if Thou forsake me ? or what can I justly allege, if Thou refuse to grant my petition ?

This, indeed, I may truly think and say : *Lord I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have nothing of myself that is good* : but I fail and am defective in all things, and ever tend to *nothing*.

And unless I am supported and interiorly instructed by Thee ; I become quite tepid and dissolute.

2. But thou, O Lord, art always the same, and endurest for ever ; always good, just, and holy ; doing all things well, justly and holily, and disposing them in wisdom.

But I, who am more inclined to go back than to go forward, continue not always in one state ; for seven different seasons are changed over me.

Yet it quickly becomes better when it pleaseth

Thee, and Thou stretchest out Thy helping hand ; for Thou alone without man's aid can assist me, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my heart shall be converted, and take its rest in Thee alone.

3. Wherefore, if I did but well know how to cast away from me all human comfort, either for the sake of devotion, or through the necessity of seeking Thee, because there is no man that can comfort me, then might I justly depend on Thy grace, and rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks be to Thee from whom all proceeds, as often as it goes well with me.

But, for my part, I am mere vanity, and nothing in Thy sight ; an inconstant, weak man.

What have I then to glory in ? or why do I desire to be esteemed ?

Is it not for nothing ? And this is most vain.

Truly vain-glory is an evil plague, a very great vanity ; because it draws us away from true glory, and robs us of heavenly grace.

For whilst a man takes pleasure in himself, he displeaseth Thee : whilst he seeks the praises of men, he is deprived of true virtues.

5. But true glory and holy joy is to glory in Thee, and not in one's self ; to rejoice in Thy name, and not to be delighted in one's own virtue, nor in any creature, save only for Thy sake.

Let Thy name be praised, not mine ; let Thy work be extolled, not mine ; let Thy holy name be blessed ; but to me let nothing be attributed of the praises of men.

Thou art my glory ; Thou art the joy of my heart.

In Thee will I glory and rejoice all the day ; but *for myself I will glory in nothing but in my infirmities* (2 Cor. xii. 5).

6. Let the Jews seek the glory which one man receives from another ; I will seek that which is from God alone.

All human glory, all temporal honour, all worldly grandeur, compared to Thy eternal glory is but vanity and foolishness.

O my truth and mercy, my God, O blessed Trinity !
to Thee alone be all praise, honour, power, and glory,
for ever and ever.

LESSON L.

Of Spiritual Dryness and Barrenness : Of the Want of all Consolation.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Ourselfs also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselfs groan within ourselfs, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope. For what a man seeth, why doth he hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not : we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groaning. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what the Spirit desireth : because he asketh for the saints according to God. And we know that to them that love God all things work together unto good, to such as according to his purpose are called to be saints.—Rom. viii. 23.

And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.—2 Tim. iii. 12.

A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice ; and your joy no man shall take from you.—John xvi. 21.

These words warn you that interior anxieties must in this life be of necessity suffered by the soul, feeling

those oppositions and contradictions of senses and thoughts which lust and wrestle against the spirit. And therefore, let the soul determine to bear this persecution, and these birth-pains of the spirit, till the hand of God sends down release and consolation. This mystery of spiritual distress is explained by both your masters as follows.

INTRODUCTION—PT. IV., CH. XIV.—OF SPIRITUAL DRYNESS AND BARRENNESS.

1. You shall then do as I have directed you, dear *Philothea*, when you shall have such consolations. But this fair and pleasant weather will not last always; it will happen sometimes that you shall be so destitute and deprived of all sense of devotion, that you will think your soul a wild, fruitless, barren field, in which there is neither path nor way to find God, nor any dew of grace to refresh it, because of these droughts which seem to reduce it altogether to fallow waste. Alas! the poor soul in this state deserves compassion, and especially when this desolation is vehement, for then, in imitation of *David*, she feeds herself night and day with tears, while the enemy, to cast her into despair by a thousand suggestions, mocks her, saying: Ah! poor soul, where is thy God? by what means canst thou find Him? who shall ever restore to thee the joy of His holy grace?

2. What will you do at that time, *Philothea*? Observe from whence this evil proceeds; for we ourselves are often the cause of our own drought and barrenness. 1. As a mother denies sugar to her child that is subject to the worms, so God takes consolations from us when we take some vain pleasure in them, and are subject to the worms of presumption. O

my God, it is good for me that Thou hast humbled me (Ps. cxviii. 71); *yes, for before I was humbled I did offend Thee* (Ib. 67). 2. When we neglect to gather the sweetness and delights of the love of God in due time, then, in punishment of our slothfulness, He removes them from us. The *Israelite* who gathered not manna early in the morning, could find none after sunrise, for then it was all melted. 3. We are sometimes laid in a bed of sensual contentment and transitory comforts, as was the spouse of the Canticles; the Bridegroom of our souls comes and knocks at the door of our hearts; He inspires us to return to our spiritual exercises, but we dally with Him because it troubles us to forsake these fooleries, and to separate ourselves from our false delights; for this cause He goes from us, and leaves us in our sloth; but afterwards, when we would seek him out, we must suffer much to find Him, and deservedly, since we have been so unfaithful and disloyal to His love as to refuse it for worldly vanities. Ah! you still have the flour of *Egypt*, you shall have none of the manna of heaven! Bees detest all kind of artificial odours, and the sweetnesses of the Holy Ghost are incompatible with the sophisticated delights of the world.

3. The dissimulation and cunning used in the confessions and in the spiritual communications we make to our Director causes this drought and barrenness; for since you lie to the Holy Ghost, no marvel if He deny you His consolations. You will not be simple and open as a little child, you shall not have the sugar-plums of little children.

4. You have glutted yourself with worldly contentments, no wonder then if spiritual delights be unsavoury to you. Doves already satisfied, says the

ancient proverb, think cherries bitter. *He hath filled the hungry with good things*, says Our Lady, *and hath sent the rich away empty* (Luke i. 53). They that are rich in worldly treasures, are not capable of spiritual ones.

5. Have you carefully preserved the fruits of consolations already received? then shall you receive new ones; for to him that has, more shall be given, and he that has not what was given to him, but by negligence has lost it, even that he hath not shall be taken from him; that is, he shall be deprived of the favours and graces which were prepared for him. It is true the rain revives plants that are green, but from those which are no longer so, it takes away the life which they have not; for it wholly rotteth them.

6. For many such causes do we lose comfort in devotion, and fall into barrenness and dryness of spirit. Let us then examine our conscience whether we find in us any such fault. But note, *Philothea*, this examination is not to be made with unquietness and too much curiosity; but after we have faithfully called ourselves to account, if we find the cause of the evil in ourselves, let us thank God; for the disease is half cured when the cause of it is discovered. If, on the other side, you find nothing in particular which may seem to have caused this barrenness, trouble not yourself about any more curious inquisition, but with all simplicity, without examining any more particularities, do this which I will tell you.

7. First, humble yourself profoundly in the presence of God, in acknowledgment that you are nothing, misery only excepted. Alas! what am I when I am left to myself? No other thing, O Lord, but a dry barren ground, which by being everywhere burnt up and

cracked, witnesses how it thirsts for rain from heaven, and in the meantime the wind parches it, and scatters it into dust. 2. Call upon God, and demand of Him His spiritual joy: *Render me, O Lord, the joy of Thy salvation* (Ps. l. 14); *My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me* (Matt. xxvi. 39). Get thee away, O thou unfruitful north wind that witherest my soul, and come, O prosperous wind of consolations, and blow upon my garden, and its good affections will breathe forth the odour of sweetness. 3. Go to your Confessor, open your heart to him, make him see all the recesses of your soul, take his advice sincerely and humbly; for God, who infinitely loves obedience, often renders very profitable the counsel we take from others, especially from the directors of our souls, even though it seems unlikely to help, as He made the the waters of *Jordan* healthful to *Naaman*, the use of which *Eliseus*, without any appearance of human reason, had ordained him.

8. But after all this, nothing is so profitable, nothing so fruitful in such drought and barrenness, as to moderate our desire for deliverance, and not suffer it to be too ardent and passionate. I say not but that we ought humbly and quietly to wish for this deliverance; yet we should not be too earnest, but submit ourselves to the pure mercy of God's Providence; to the end that, so long as it pleases Him, He may make use of us amidst these thorns and amongst these desires. Let us say, then, to God at these times, *O Father, if it be possible, take this cup from me*. But let us withal add with great courage, *Yet not my will be done, but Thine* (Matt. xxvi. 39). And here let us stop, with as much repose as may be; for God seeing us in this holy indifference, will comfort us with many graces and

favours, as when He saw *Abraham* resolved to deprive himself of his son *Isaac*, He was pleased with his indifference and his pure resignation, comforting him with a most pleasant vision, and with most welcome blessings. We ought, then, in all kinds of afflictions, as well corporal as spiritual, in all distractions or subtractions of sensible devotion happening to us, to say from our heart with profound submission, *Our Lord gave me consolations, and Our Lord has taken them from me, His Holy Name be blessed!* For if we persist in this humility, He will restore us His choice blessings, as He did to *Job*, who constantly used the like words in all his desolations.

9. Finally, my *Philothea*, in all this drought and sterility let us not lose courage, but, expecting patiently the return of consolations, let us go on our way, and forsake not any exercise of devotion, but, if it be possible, multiply good works, and, not being able to present to our Spouse moist sweetmeats,* let us offer Him dry ones ; for all is one to Him, provided that the heart which offers them be perfectly resolved to love Him. When the spring is fair, bees make more honey and fewer nymphs ; for the good weather favouring them, they are so busy in their harvest upon the flowers, that they forget the increasing of their young ones ; but when the spring is cold and stormy, they make more young ones and less honey ; for not being able to go forth to gather honey, they employ themselves to multiply and increase their race. So many times it happens, *Philothea*, that the soul, finding herself in the fair spring of spiritual comforts, busies herself so much in gathering and sucking them, that, in the abundance of these delights she produces fewer good

* Confitures liquides.

works ; and, on the contrary, in spiritual storms and desolations, the more destitute she is of the pleasant contentments of devotion, the more she multiplies solid works, and abounds in the inward production of true virtues, as of patience, humility, self-contempt, resignation, and abnegation of self-love.

10. It is, then, a great abuse of many, especially of women, to believe that the service we do to God, without savour, without tenderness of heart and feeling, is less agreeable to His Divine Majesty, since, on the contrary, our actions are like roses, which, when fresh, have more beauty, yet, when dry, have more strength and fragrance. For just so, though our works done with tenderness of heart are more acceptable to us—to us, I say, that consider only our own delight—yet, when they are performed in time of dryness and barrenness, they have more sweetness and value in the sight of God. Yes, dear *Philothea*, in time of desolation, our will carries us to the service of God by main force, and consequently, it must needs be more vigorous and constant than in time of comfort.

11. It is no great matter to serve a prince in the pleasures of peace and amongst the delights of the court, but to serve him in the difficulties of war, amongst troubles and persecutions, is a true mark of constancy and loyalty. *Blessed Angela of Foligno* says that the prayers which are most acceptable to God are those which are made by force and constraint, that is, to which we apply ourselves not for any delight we find in them, or any inclination of our own, but merely to please God, whereto our will drives us by violence, forcing and breaking through the dryness and resistance which oppose us. I say

the same of all sorts of good works, for the more contradiction we find to them either exterior or interior, the more are they prized and esteemed in the sight of God. The less there is of our particular interest in the pursuit of virtues, the more brightly the purity of God's love shines in us. A child easily kisses his mother when she gives him sugar; but it is a sign of greater love if he kiss her after she has given him wormwood or aloes.

CH. XV.—CONFIRMATION AND EXPLANATION OF
WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BY A NOTABLE EXAMPLE.

1. To make this instruction more evident, I will recite an excellent piece of the history of *St. Bernard*, in such manner as I have found it in a learned and judicious writer. He says, then, thus:—It is an ordinary thing almost to all them that begin to serve God, and are not yet experienced in the subtraction of grace and in spiritual changes, that the fervour of sensible devotion, and that acceptable light which makes them hasten into the way of God, happening to fail, they presently lose courage, and fall into faintness and sadness of heart. Persons of understanding give this reason for it, that human nature cannot long continue fasting and without some delectation, either heavenly or earthly. Now, as souls lifted up above themselves by the taste of higher pleasures, easily renounce visible objects, so when by God's disposition that spiritual joy is taken from them, finding themselves on the other side deprived of bodily comforts, and being not yet accustomed to expect with patience the return of the true sun, it seems to them that they are neither in heaven nor on earth, but that they are to be buried

in a perpetual night, so that, like little children newly weaned, having not the breast, they languish and groan, and become froward and troublesome, especially to themselves.

2. This, then, happened, in a journey related in the history, to one of the company called *Geoffrey of Peronne*, but newly dedicated to the service of God. He being suddenly become dry and destitute of consolation, and possessed with inward darkness, began to remember his worldly friends, his parents, and the riches he had forsaken, by which means he was assaulted with so strong a temptation, that not being able to hide it in his discourse, one of his greatest confidants perceived it, and having dexterously found a fit opportunity, spake thus unto him in private :—What means this, *Geoffrey* ? whence comes it that thou art so extraordinary pensive and melancholy ? Ah, brother ! answered *Geoffrey* with a deep sigh, I shall never more be merry while I live. The other, moved with compassion at these words, with a brotherly zeal went and told all this to their common father, *St. Bernard*, who, perceiving the danger, went into the next church to pray to God for him, and *Geoffrey*, in the meanwhile overwhelmed with sadness, resting his head upon a stone, fell asleep ; but after a little time both of them arose, the one from prayer with the favour obtained, the other from sleep with so pleasant and smiling a countenance that his dear friend, marvelling at so great and sudden a change, could not refrain from giving him a friendly reproach upon the answer he had but a little before given him. Then *Geoffrey* replied :—I told thee before that I should never more be joyful, now I assure thee that I shall never more be sorrowful.

3. This was the issue of that devout person's temptation. But observe in this story, dear *Philothea*, —1. That God ordinarily gives some foretastes of heavenly joy to such as enter into His service, to withdraw them from earthly pleasures and encourage them in the pursuit of the Divine love, as a mother makes use of honey to entice and allure her little child to the breast. 2. That notwithstanding this, God sometimes, according to the disposition of His wisdom, takes from us the milk and honey of consolations, to the end that, being weaned in this manner, we may learn to eat the drier and harder bread of a vigorous devotion, exercised by the trial of affliction and temptations. 3. That sometimes very vehement temptations arise in this drought and barrenness, and then we must constantly fight against them, for they come not from God. But withal we must patiently suffer this desolation, since God is pleased to exercise us with it. 4. That we must never lose courage among these inward griefs, nor say with good *Geoffrey*, I shall never more be joyful; for in the night we must expect the day, and again in the fairest spiritual weather, we must not say, *Now shall I never more be sad*. No, for as the wise man says, in time of prosperity we must be mindful of adversity; we must hope in our afflictions, and fear in our prosperities, and, as well in the one as in the other, we must always be humble. 5. That it is a sovereign remedy to discover our evil to some spiritual friend who may be able to comfort us.

4. In fine, for conclusion of this so necessary admonition, I observe that, as in all other things, so in these, God and the devil have contrary designs. For God would by them bring us to purity of heart,

to a general renunciation of our own interest in what concerns His service, and to a perfect denial of ourselves, while the devil endeavours by his pains to make us lose courage, and to put us into the way of sensual pleasures, and at last to render us troublesome to ourselves and others, thereby to discredit and defame holy devotion. But if you observe diligently these lessons which I have given you, you shall much augment your perfection in the exercise you shall perform amongst these interior afflictions, of which I will not end the discourse till I have said one word more. 6. Sometimes these loathings, this drought and barrenness proceed from an indisposition of body, as when through an excess of watching, working, fasting, we find ourselves oppressed with weariness, drowsiness, heaviness, and such like infirmities, which, although they depend upon the body, yet cease not to incommode the spirit by reason of the strict correspondence between them. Now, in such occasions we must always be mindful to perform many acts of virtue with our spirit, or superior will; for although our whole soul seem to be asleep, and stupefied with drowsiness and weariness, yet the actions of our spirit cease not to be very acceptable to God, and we may say at that time with the sacred Spouse, *I sleep, but my heart watcheth* (Cant. v. 2); and, as I said before, though there be less delight in working in this manner, yet there is more virtue and merit. The remedy in such occurrences is to refresh the body by some kind of lawful delight and recreation. So *St. Francis* ordained that his Religious should use such moderation in their labours that they should not depress the fervour of the spirit.

5. And this makes me remember how this glorious

Father was once assaulted and tormented with so profound a melancholy of spirit that he could not but declare it in his behaviour; for when he desired to converse with his Religious, he could not; if he withdrew himself from them, it was worse; abstinence and mortification of the flesh oppressed him, and prayer eased him not at all. He continued two years in this manner, so that he seemed utterly forsaken of God; but at length, after he had humbly suffered this rough tempest, our Saviour in a moment restored him to a happy tranquillity. This shows that the greatest servants of God are subject to these disturbances, and therefore the least ought not to be dismayed if sometimes they happen to them.

IMITATION—BK. II., CH. IX.—OF THE WANT OF ALL
CONSOLATION.

1. It is not hard to despise all human comfort, when we have divine.

But it is much, very much, to be able to want all comfort, both human and divine; and to be willing to bear this interior banishment for God's honour, and to seek one's self in nothing, nor to think of one's own merit.

What great thing is it, if thou be cheerful and devout, when grace comes? This hour is desirable to all.

He rides at ease that is carried by the grace of God.

And what wonder if he feel no weight, who is carried by the Almighty, and led on by the Sovereign Guide?

2. We willingly would have something to comfort us; and it is with difficulty that a man can put off himself.

The holy martyr, Laurence, overcame the world,

with his prelate, because he despised whatever seemed delightful in this world; and for the love of Christ he also suffered the High Priest of God, Sixtus, whom he exceedingly loved, to be taken away from him.

He overcame, therefore, the love of man by the love of the Creator; and instead of the comfort he had in man, he made choice rather of God's pleasure.

So do thou also learn to part with a necessary and beloved friend for the love of God.

And take it not to heart when thou art forsaken by a friend; knowing that one time or other we all must part.

3. A man must go through a long and great conflict in himself, before he can learn fully to overcome himself, and to draw his whole affection towards God.

When a man stands upon himself, he easily declines after human comforts.

But a true lover of Christ, and a diligent pursuer of virtue, does not hunt after comforts, nor seek such sensible sweetnesses, but is rather willing to bear strong trials, and hard labours for Christ.

4. Therefore, when God gives spiritual comfort, receive it with thanksgiving; but know that it is the bounty of God, not thy merit.

Be not puffed up, be not overjoyed, nor vainly presume, but rather be the more humble for this gift, and the more cautious and fearful in all thy actions; for this hour will pass away, and temptation will follow.

When comfort shall be taken away from thee, do not presently despair; but wait with humility and patience for the heavenly visit; for God is able to restore thee a greater consolation.

This is no new thing, nor strange to those who have experienced the ways of God; for in the great saints and ancient prophets there has often been this kind of variety.

5. Hence one said, at the time when grace was

with him: *In my abundance I said, I shall never be moved* (Ps. xxix. 7).

But when grace was withdrawn, he immediately tells us what he experienced in himself: *Thou hast turned away Thy face from me, and I became troubled.*

Yet, in the meantime, he despairs not, but more earnestly prays to the Lord, and says: *To Thee, O Lord, I will cry, and I will pray to my God.*

At length, he receives the fruit of his prayer, and witnesses that he was heard, saying: *The Lord hath heard me, and hath had mercy on me: the Lord is become my helper.*

But in what manner? *Thou hast turned*, says he, *my mourning into joy to me, and Thou hast encompassed me with gladness.*

If it has been thus with great saints, we that are weak and poor must not be discouraged if we are sometimes fervent, sometimes cold; because the spirit comes and goes according to his own good pleasure.

Wherefore holy Job says: *Thou visitest him early in the morning, and Thou provest him suddenly* (Job vii. 18).

6. Wherein then can I hope, or in what must I put my trust, but in God's great mercy alone, and in the hope of heavenly grace?

For whether I have with me good men, or devout brethren, or faithful friends, or holy books, or fine treatises, or sweet singing and hymns; all these help little, and give me but little relish, when I am forsaken by grace, and left in my own poverty.

At such a time there is no better remedy than patience, and leaving myself to the will of God.

7. I never found any one so religious and devout as not to have sometimes a subtraction of grace, or feel a diminution of fervour.

No saint was ever so highly rapt and illuminated, as not to be tempted at first or last.

For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of

God who has not, for God's sake, been exercised with some tribulation.

For temptation going before, is usually a sign of ensuing consolation.

For heavenly comfort is promised to such as have been proved by temptations.

To him that overcometh, said our Lord, *I will give to eat of the tree of life* (Apoc. ii. 7).

8. Now divine consolation is given that a man may be better able to support adversities.

And temptation follows that he may not be proud of good.

The devil never sleeps, neither is the flesh yet dead ; therefore thou must not cease to prepare thyself for battle, for on the right hand, and on the left, are enemies that never rest.

LESSON LI.

Of the Method of Renewing every Year our Good Purposes: Considerations on the Favour which God does us by Calling us to His Service: Examination of our Soul concerning her Progress in Devotion.

TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

For which cause I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power, and of love, and of sobriety.—2 Tim. i. 6.

To put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth.—Ephes. iv. 22.

Try your ownelves if you be in the faith: prove ye yourselves. Know you not your ownelves, that Christ Jesus is in you, unless perhaps you be reprobate?—2 Cor. xiii. 5.

From these words you will understand that, besides your wonted exercises of piety, you have need of setting apart a certain time for self-inspection and examination: to judge of your good purposes, progress, or slackening in fervour: to collect new forces in order to acquire what is wanting, and lop off what is in excess. *St. Francis of Sales* will now tell you how this is to be done.

INTRODUCTION.—PT. V., CH. I.—THAT WE OUGHT EVERY YEAR TO RENEW OUR GOOD PURPOSES BY THE EXERCISES FOLLOWING.

1. The first point of these exercises consists in knowing well the importance of them. Our human nature falls easily from her good affections, because of the frailty and evil inclinations of our flesh, which burden the soul and drag her downwards, unless she often raise up herself by main force of resolution, as birds fall suddenly to the ground, if they multiply not the strokes and spreadings of their wings to keep themselves in flight. For this cause, dear *Philothea*, you have need very often to renew and repeat the good purposes you have made to serve God, for fear lest by not doing so, you relapse into your first estate, or rather into a far worse; for spiritual falls have this property, that they cast us always lower than the estate was from which we ascended up to devotion.

2. There is no clock, be it never so good, but must be wound up twice a day, morning and evening, and besides that, at least once a year it must be taken in pieces to take away the rust it has gathered, to mend what is bent, or broken, and to repair what is worn; so he that has a true care of his heart ought to wind it up to God, evening and morning, by the aforesaid exercise; and, moreover, many times take a review of his estate, redress and rectify it, and at least once a year take it in pieces, and examine diligently every part of it, that is, all its affections and passions, that all defects may be repaired; and as the clockmaker, with some delicate oil, anoints the wheels, the springs, and all the moving parts of his clock, that the motions may be more nimble and the clock less subject to rust, so the devout person who has thus examined his

heart, to renew it well, must anoint it with the sacraments of confession and the Holy Eucharist. This exercise will repair your forces decayed by time, warm your heart, make your good resolutions return green, and your virtues blossom. The ancient Christians practised this diligently on the anniversary day of our Saviour's Baptism, on which, as *St. Gregory Nazianzen* witnesses, they renewed those professions and protestations which they had made in this sacrament. Let us do the like, my dear *Philothea*, disposing ourselves most willingly to it, and employing ourselves very seriously therein. Having then chosen a fit time, according to the advice of your ghostly father, retiring yourself into a little more spiritual and real solitude than ordinary, make one, or two, or three meditations on the following points, according to the method I have given you in the Second Part.

CH. II.—CONSIDERATIONS ON THE FAVOUR WHICH
GOD DOES US BY CALLING US TO HIS SERVICE,
ACCORDING TO THE PROTESTATION.

1. Consider the points of your Protestation. The first is to have for ever forsaken, cast away, detested, and renounced all mortal sin; the second to have dedicated and consecrated your soul, your heart, and your body with all your faculties, to the love and service of God; the third, that if you chance to fall into any evil action, you will immediately rise again by God's grace. Are not these good, just, noble, and generous resolutions? Consider well in your own soul how holy and reasonable this Protestation is, and how much to be desired.

2. Consider to whom you have made this Protestation, for it is to God. If our solemn word given to

men strictly obliges us, how much more does that we have given to God? *Ah Lord!* said *David*, *it is to thee my heart hath spoken, my heart hath pronounced this good word; I will not forget it* (Ps. xliv. 2).

3. Consider in whose presence; for it was in the sight of the whole Court of Heaven. Ah! the Blessed Virgin, *St. Joseph*, your good Angel, *St. Louis*, all this blessed company beheld you, and sighed at your words with sighs of joy and approbation, and with eyes of unspeakable love saw your heart prostrate at the feet of our Saviour, consecrating itself to His service. They made particular triumph for it in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and they will now make commemoration of it, if with a true heart you renew your resolutions.

4. Consider by what means you made this Protestation. Ah; how good and gracious was God to you at that time! Tell me truly were you not invited by the sweet enticements of the Holy Ghost? The cords with which God drew your little barque to this secure haven, were they not of love and charity? How He went on alluring you with His Divine sugar, the sacraments, reading, and prayer: Ah, my dear *Philothea*, you were asleep, and God watched over you; over your heart He thought thoughts of peace, He meditated for you meditations of love.

5. Consider at what time God drew you to these great resolutions; it was in the flower of your age. Ah! what happiness to learn betimes that which we cannot know but too late. *St. Augustine*, having been called at the age of thirty years, cried out: *O ancient beauty, how is it that I know Thee so late? Alas! I saw Thee before, but considered Thee not!* And you may well say, O ancient Sweetness, why did I not taste of Thee

sooner? And yet, alas! you did not deserve it then. Therefore, acknowledging the great grace of God in calling you to Him in your youth, say with *David*, *Thou hast enlightened me, O God, and touched me from my youth, and I will for ever declare Thy mercy* (Ps. lxx. 17). But if this were in old age, O *Philothea*, what a grace, after you had misspent so many former years, that God has called you before death, and stopped the course of your misery, when had it continued you had been eternally miserable?

6. Consider the effects of this vocation, and I believe you will find a good change, comparing that which you are with that which you have been. Do you not esteem it a happiness to know how to speak to God by prayer? to have an affection to love Him? to have appeased and pacified many passions which tormented you? to have avoided many sins and perplexities of conscience? and, in a word, to have communicated so much more often than you would have done, uniting yourself to this sovereign Fountain of eternal graces? Ah; what inestimable favours are these; we must weigh them, *Philothea*, with the weights of the Sanctuary. It is God's Right Hand that has done all this. *The Right Hand of God*, says *David*, *has done powerfully; His Right Hand has raised me. I will not die, but live, and declare with heart, word, and deed the wonders of His goodness* (Ps. cxviii. 16).

7. After all these considerations, which, as you see, do furnish you with plenty of good affections, you must simply conclude with thanksgiving, and an affectionate prayer for your good progress. And so retire with great humility and confidence in God, deferring to pronounce your resolutions till after the second point of this exercise.

CH. III.—THE EXAMINATION OF OUR SOUL CONCERNING HER ADVANCEMENT IN DEVOTION.

1. The second point of this exercise is somewhat long, and to practise it, it is not requisite to perform it all at once, but at divers times, so as to take that which concerns your demeanour towards God at one time ; that which appertains to yourself at another ; that which touches your neighbour at a third ; and the examining of your passions at the fourth. Neither is it requisite or advisable to do it all kneeling, but only the beginning and the ending, which include the affections. The other points of the examination you may perform profitably walking, or more profitably in bed, if you can be there without drowsiness and thoroughly awake ; but to do this you must have read them well before. Yet it is requisite to perform all this second point in three days and two nights at the most, taking every day and night some hour, that is to say, some time most convenient to you, for if this exercise should be done at times far distant one from another, it would lose its force and make but weak impressions.

2. After every point of the examination, observe in what you find yourself to fail, and in what you are to blame, and what principal disorders you have discovered, that so you may declare them, and take counsel, resolution, and strength of spirit ; and although on those days in which you shall perform this exercise it is not necessary to retire yourself absolutely from company, yet you must be somewhat more private than ordinary, especially towards the evening that you may go early to bed, and take the rest of body and repose of mind necessary to meditation ; and in the daytime you must use frequent aspirations to

God, to Our Lady, to the angels, to all the heavenly Jerusalem: and all this must be done with a heart longing after God and the perfection of your soul.

3. To begin this examination well: 1. Place yourself in the presence of God. 2. Invoke the Holy Ghost, imploring light and clearness that you may know yourself well, with *St. Augustine*, who cried out before God in humble spirit, *O Lord, let me know Thee, and let me know myself*, and with *St. Francis*, who asked God, *Who art Thou, and who am I?* Protest that you are not solicitous of your advancement to the end to rejoice at it in yourself, but rejoice at it in God; not to glorify yourself, but to glorify God, and give Him thanks for it. Protest likewise that if you find that you have gone but little forward, or rather backward, you will not for all that be dejected, or wax colder through faintness of heart, but will rather take more courage, become more humble, and take more care to amend your faults by the assistance of God's grace. 3. This done, consider gently and quietly how you have behaved yourself even till that present hour towards God, towards your neighbour, and towards yourself.

CH. IV.—AN EXAMINATION OF THE ESTATE OF OUR SOULS TOWARDS GOD.

1. In what state is your heart as concerning mortal sin? Have you a firm resolution never to commit any, whatsoever shall happen? Has this resolution continued since your last protestation till this time? In this resolution consists the foundation of a spiritual life.

2. How is your heart disposed in respect of God's commandments? Do you find them good, pleasant,

and delightful? Ah! my child, he that has his taste right, and his stomach good, loves wholesome meats and rejects others.

3. How is your heart in case of venial sins? We cannot keep ourselves from committing now and then one; but is there none to which you have a special inclination? or, what is worse, is there none to which you bear love and affection?

4. How is your heart affected towards spiritual exercises? Do you love them and esteem them? Are you not out of humour with them? To which of them do you find yourself least or most inclined? To hear the word of God, to read it, to discourse of it, to meditate, to aspire to God, to go to confession, to receive spiritual instructions, to prepare yourself for Communion, to communicate, to restrain your affections; in all this what is there repugnant to your heart? And if you find anything to which your heart has less inclination, examine from whence that dislike arises, and what causes it.

5. How is your heart towards God himself? Does it take pleasure in the remembrance of God? Does it find sweetness therein? Ah! *David* said, *I remembered God, and was delighted* (Ps. lxxvi. 4). Do you find a promptness and willingness in your heart to love God, and a particular contentment in relishing this love? Does your heart recreate itself in meditating on the immensity, bounty, and sweetness of God? If the remembrance of God happen to you amidst affairs and vanities of the world, does it find place in your heart? Does it seize upon it? Do you find your heart turn towards God, and, as it were, go to meet Him? Certainly there are such souls in the world.

6. A wife, when her husband comes home from a long journey, so soon as she knows of his return or hears his voice, although she be engaged in business, and detained from him by some necessity, yet her heart is not withheld from him, but abandons all other thoughts to think upon her husband returned. It is the same with souls that love God well; let them be never so busy, when the remembrance of God comes near them, they neglect all things else for joy that this dear remembrance is returned. And this is an extremely good sign.

7. How is your heart affected towards Jesus Christ, God, and Man? Do you take pleasure in Him? Bees delight in their honey, wasps in ill savours; so good souls take a contentment in Jesus Christ, and bear an extreme tenderness of love towards Him; but the wicked delight in vanities.

8. How is your heart affected to our Blessed Lady, your good Angel, and the Saints? Do you truly love them? Have you an especial confidence in their favour and intercession? Do their images, lives, and praises please you?

9. Concerning your tongue, how do you speak of God? Does it please you to speak well of Him according to your condition and ability? Do you like to sing hymns?

10. Concerning works, think whether you have a true hearty desire of the exterior glory of God, and to do somewhat for His honour; for such as love God love with Him the decoration of His House.

11. Consider whether you have forsaken any affection, or renounced anything for God's sake; for it is a great sign of love to deprive ourselves of anything in consideration of Him whom we love. What have you then heretofore forsaken for the love of God?

LESSON LII.

Examination of Our Estate touching Ourselves, Our Neighbour: Examination of the Affections of Our Soul: Conclusion of this Examination.

No texts of Scripture are given for these two last lessons, because they consist only of exercises framed, in accordance with principles already laid down, by the practical prudence of the holy Doctor, St. Francis of Sales. And it is enough to give his exercises.

INTRODUCTION—PT. V., CH. V.—AN EXAMINATION OF OUR ESTATE TOUCHING OURSELVES.

1. How do you love yourself? Do you not love yourself too much for the world's sake? If so, you will desire to dwell always here, and will be very solicitous to establish yourself on earth; but if you love yourself for Heaven's sake, you will desire, at least you will be contented, to depart hence whensoever it shall please our Saviour.

2. Do you keep good order in the love of yourself? For there is nothing ruins us but the inordinate love of ourselves. Now, well-ordered love requires that we love the soul better than the body, that we take more care to store up virtue than any other thing, that we make more account of heavenly glory than of base and transitory honour. A well-ordered heart will oftener say to itself, *What will the angels say if I think upon such a thing*, than *What will men say*?

3. What love do you bear to your heart? Are you willing to serve it when it is sick? Alas! you owe it

this care to help it, and procure for it succour from others when passions torment it, and to lay aside all other cares for this:

4. What do you esteem yourself in the sight of God? Nothing, doubtless. It is no great humility in a fly to think herself nothing in regard of a mountain, nor for a drop of water to esteem itself nothing in comparison of the sea, nor for a spark of fire to hold itself nothing in respect of the sun. But humility consists in not esteeming ourselves better than others, and in desiring not to be esteemed by others. In what estate are you in this respect?

5. Touching your tongue—do you not boast either one way or another? Do you not flatter yourself in speaking of yourself?

6. As for works—do you use no recreation destructive to your health? I mean, vain and unprofitable pleasures, late hours without cause, and such like.

CH. VI.—AN EXAMINATION OF THE ESTATE OF OUR SOULS TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR.

1. The love between husband and wife ought to be gentle and calm, firm and constant, and grounded principally on the ordinance of God who commends and requires it. The same is to be understood of love amongst children, kindred, and also amongst friends, every one in his degree.

2. But to speak in general, what is the state of your heart towards your neighbour? Do you love him cordially and for God's sake? To discern this well you must represent to yourself certain peevish and crabbed persons; for it is with such people that we exercise the love of God towards our neighbour, and much more with such as have injured us either

in word or deed. Examine well whether your heart be right towards them, or whether you find any repugnance against this love.

3. Are you apt to speak ill of your neighbour, and especially of such as love you not? Do you any prejudice to your neighbour, directly or indirectly? With a little reflection you will easily discern your defects.

CH. VII.—AN EXAMINATION OF THE AFFECTIONS OF OUR SOUL.

1. I have thus drawn out these points into length, because in the examination of them consists the knowledge of our spiritual advancement. For as to the examination of sins, I leave that for the confessions of those who never think of advancing.

2. Yet we must not labour in any one of these articles otherwise than very gently, examining only in what state our heart has been concerning them since our resolution, and what notable defects we have committed in them.

3. But to abridge all, we must reduce our examen to the survey of our passions, and if it be troublesome to consider every particular so exactly as is prescribed, we may examine in what state we have been, and how we have behaved ourselves, in this manner—in our love towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves—in our hatred towards sin in ourselves, and towards sin in others; for we must desire the extirpation both of the one and of the other—in desires touching riches, pleasures, honours—in fear of danger of falling into sin, and in fear of loss of worldly goods; for we fear the one too little and the other too much—in hope, fixed too much upon the world and temporal

things, or too little upon God and eternal things—in sadness, if it be too excessive for transitory things, and in joy, if it be too great for trivial things. In fine, what affections predominate in your heart? What passions most of all possess it? In what has it chiefly gone astray? For by the passions of the soul we may judge of her estate, examining them one after another; for as he that plays on the lute by touching all the strings finds which are out of tune, and accords them either by winding them up or letting them down, so we examine the love, hatred, desire, fear, hope, sadness, and joy of our soul; if we find them out of tune for that air which we would play, which is the glory of God, we may tune them by means of His grace and the counsel of our ghostly father.

CH. VIII.—AFFECTIONS TO BE EXERCISED AFTER THIS EXAMINATION.

1. After you have gently considered each point of this examination, and seen in what state you are, you shall proceed to affections in this manner.

1. Give God thanks for the amendment you have found in your life since your resolution, and acknowledge that it was His mercy alone that has wrought it in you and for you.

2. Humble yourself profoundly before His Majesty, acknowledging that if you have not much profited, it has been your own fault, because you have not faithfully, courageously, and constantly complied with the inspirations, lights, and motions which He has given you in prayer and by other means.

3. Promise Him that you will for ever praise Him for the favours conferred upon you, in converting you from your evil inclinations to this amendment.

4. Ask pardon of Him for the unfaithfulness and disloyalty which you have returned for these graces.

5. Offer Him your heart, to the end He may make Himself its sole Master.

6. Beseech Him to render you entirely faithful to Him.

7. Invoke the saints, our Blessed Lady, your good Angel, your Patron, St. Joseph, and others.

LESSON LIII.

Renovation of the Soul by Means of Considerations on the Excellence of our Soul: Of Virtue: The Examples of the Saints: The Love of Christ for us: The Eternal Love of God: Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION—PT. V., CH. IX.—CONSIDERATIONS PROPER TO RENEW OUR GOOD PURPOSES.

After you have made this examination, and diligently conferred with some good director concerning your defects and the remedies for them, take these considerations following, making one of them every day by way of meditation, employing therein the time of your prayer, and do this always in the same method for the preparation and for the affections which you used in the meditations of the First Part, first of all placing yourself in the presence of God, and then imploring His grace to establish you in His holy love and service.

CH. X.—THE FIRST CONSIDERATION: OF THE EXCELLENCE OF OUR SOUL.

1. Consider the worth and excellence of your soul, endowed with an understanding which knows not only all this visible world, but also that there are angels and a heaven, that there is a most High God, most good and ineffable, that there is an eternity; knows, moreover, how to live well in this visible world in order to join the angels in Paradise, and enjoy God eternally.

2. Your soul has also a will, all noble, which can love God, and cannot hate Him in Himself. Consider your heart, how generous it is ; and that as no corrupt thing can entice bees, but their delight is only amongst flowers, so your heart hath no repose but in God alone ; no creature can satisfy it. Recall boldly the most dear and beloved affections which heretofore possessed your heart, and judge in truth whether they were not full of unquiet molestations, of irksome thoughts, and importunate cares, amongst which your poor heart was miserable.

3. Alas ! our heart runs greedily after creatures, thinking to satisfy its desires on them, but as soon as it has met with them it finds itself deceived, and that nothing can content it, God being unwilling that our heart should find any resting place till, like the dove sent by Noe from the ark, it returns to Him from whom it came forth. Ah ! how beautiful is the nature of our heart, and why, then, do we detain it against its will in the service of creatures ?

4. O my fair soul ! should you say, thou canst understand and love God, why wilt thou content thyself with less ? Thou mayest pretend to eternity, wherefore dost thou busy thyself in momentary things ? It was one of the griefs of the Prodigal, that when he might have fared deliciously at his father's table he fed nastily among swine. O my soul ! thou art capable of God ; woe to thee if thou satisfy thyself with anything less than God.

5. Rouse up your soul vigorously with this consideration ; put her in mind that she is immortal and worthy of eternity ; fill her with courage upon this subject.

CH. XI.—THE SECOND CONSIDERATION: OF THE EXCELLENCE OF VIRTUES.

1. Consider that only virtue and devotion can render your soul contented in this world. See how fair they are! Make a comparison between virtues and their contrary vices. What sweetness is there in patience, compared to revenge; in mildness, compared to anger and frowardness; in humility, compared to pride and ambition; in liberality, compared to covetousness; in charity, compared to envy; in sobriety, compared to intemperance! Virtues have this excellence, that they delight the soul with an incomparable sweetness and pleasure after we have practised them, whereas vices leave her infinitely wearied and tired. Why endeavour we not then to obtain these pleasures?

2. In case of vices, he that has but few is not contented, and he that has many is discontented; but for virtues, he that hath but few has already a content which daily increases.

3. O devout life, how fair, lovely, sweet, and pleasant art thou! Thou sweetenest tribulations, and augmentest consolations. Without thee, even good is evil, pleasures are full of restless troubles and deceitfulness. Ah! he that understands thee well will say with the *Samaritan*: *Lord, give me this water*, a very frequent aspiration of the holy Mother, *St. Teresa*, and *St. Catherine of Genoa*, although upon different occasions.

CH. XII.—THE THIRD CONSIDERATION: OF THE EXAMPLES OF THE SAINTS.

1. Consider the examples of the Saints of all ranks. What is it that they have not done to love God, and

to be entirely His? Look on the Martyrs, invincible in their resolutions, what torments have they not suffered in keeping them! But above all, see those fair and dazzling Virgins, whiter than lilies in purity, redder than roses in charity, some at twelve, others at thirteen, fifteen, and twenty years of age, have endured a thousand sorts of martyrdoms rather than renounce their resolutions, not only in the profession of faith, but also in their protestation of devotion; some dying rather than they would forsake their virginity; others rather than they would quit their attendance on the poor, comforting the afflicted, and burying the dead. O what constancy has that frail sex shown in like occasions!

2. Consider so many holy Confessors—with what courage have they contemned the world, how invincible have they been in their resolutions; nothing could make them relinquish them; they embraced them without reservation, and kept them without exception. O what admirable things does *St. Augustine* write of his mother, *St. Monica*! With what constancy did she pursue her enterprise of serving God, in her marriage and in her widowhood! What things *St. Jerome* writes of his dear daughter, *St. Paula*, amongst so many crosses, so many various accidents! What is there that we may not do after such excellent patterns? What we are, that were they. They did all for the same God, for the same virtues; why should we not do as much in our condition, and according to our vocation for our good resolution and holy protestation?

CH. XIII.—THE FOURTH CONSIDERATION: OF THE LOVE THAT JESUS CHRIST BEARS US.

1. Consider the love with which Jesus Christ our Lord suffered so much in this world, and especially in the Garden of Mount *Olivet* and upon Mount *Calvary*. This love concerned you, and by all His pains and torments, He obtained of God the Father good resolutions and protestations for your heart, and by the same means further obtained all things necessary for your soul to maintain, nourish, strengthen, and fulfil these resolutions. O Resolution! how precious art thou, being daughter of such a mother as is the Passion of my Saviour. Oh, how carefully ought my soul to cherish thee, since thou hast been so dear to my sweet Jesus! O Saviour of my soul! Thou hast died to gain me these resolutions. Ah! give me grace to die rather than to lose them. Observe, *Philothea*, it is certain that the Heart of our dear Jesus saw your heart from the tree of the Cross, and loved it, and by this love obtained for it all the blessings that ever you shall have, and amongst others these resolutions. Yes, my dear *Philothea*, we may all say with *Jeremias* the Prophet, *O my Lord, before I was, Thou hast beheld me, and called me by my name*, since that in truth His Divine goodness in His love and mercy prepared all the general and particular means of our salvation, and consequently, our resolutions. Yes, without doubt, as a woman prepares the cradle, linen, swathing bands, and even a nurse for the child which she hopes to bring forth, although it be not yet in the world, so our Saviour, of whose goodness you are born, intending to bring you forth to salvation, and to make you His child, prepared upon the tree of the Cross all that was necessary for you—your spiritual cradle, your linen

and swathing bands, your nurse, and all that was convenient for your blessedness. These are all the means, all the allurements, all the graces by which He conducts your soul and would bring it to its perfection.

2. Ah! my God, how deeply ought we to imprint this in our memory. Is it possible I have been loved, and so tenderly loved by my Saviour, that He should think of me in particular, and of these little occurrences by which He has drawn me to Him? And how, then, ought we to value, esteem, and employ all this to our advantage. How consoling! The loving heart of my God thought upon *Philothea*, loved her, and procured her a thousand means of salvation, even as much as though there had been no other soul in the world for him to think of; just as the sun shining upon one side of the earth, enlightens it no less than if it shone in no other place but only there, in the very same manner did our Lord think and take care of all His dear children, providing for each one of us as though He had not thought upon the rest. *He hath loved me*, said *St. Paul*, and *hath given Himself for me!* as if he had said, for me only, just as though He had done nothing for the rest. O *Philothea*, this ought to be engraven in your soul, to cherish and nourish your resolutions, which have been so precious to the Heart of our Saviour.

CH. XIV.—THE FIFTH CONSIDERATION: OF THE ETERNAL LOVE OF GOD TOWARDS US.

1. Consider the eternal love which God has borne you; for before our Lord Jesus Christ as Man suffered for you on the Cross, His Divine Majesty designed you in His sovereign goodness, and loved you infinitely.

But when began he to love you? Even when He began to be God. And when began He to be God? Never; for He has always been God, without beginning and without ending: and so He has loved you from all eternity; and therefore has He prepared for you the graces and favours which He has conferred upon you. He says by His prophet, speaking to you as much as to any other: *I have loved thee with a perpetual love; therefore have I drawn thee unto Me, taking pity on thee* (Jer. xxxi. 3). He then thought, amongst other things, of causing you to make these good resolutions to serve Him.

2. Oh, what resolutions are these, which God has thought of, meditated, and designed from all eternity! How dear and precious ought they to be to us! What ought we to suffer rather than to forsake one tittle of them! Sure, the world ought rather to perish: for all the world together is not worth one soul, and a soul is worth nothing without her resolutions.

CH. XV.—GENERAL AFFECTIONS ON THE PRECEDING CONSIDERATIONS, AND A CONCLUSION OF THIS EXERCISE.

1. O dear Resolution, you are the beautiful tree of life which my God has planted with His own hand in the midst of my heart, and my Saviour would water with His Blood to make it fructify; I will rather suffer a thousand deaths than that any wind shall uproot you. No! nor vanity, nor delights, nor riches, nor tribulations shall ever force me from my design.

2. Ah! Lord, it is Thou who hast planted and eternally preserved in Thy fatherly bosom this fair tree for my garden. How many souls are there which have not been favoured in this manner, and

how then shall I ever humble myself enough under Thy mercy !

3. O fair and holy Resolution, if I keep you, you will preserve me ; if you live in my soul, my soul shall live in you. Live then for ever, O Resolution, eternal in the mercy of God, live and remain eternally in me, for I will never forsake you !

4. After these affections, you must consider apart the means necessary to maintain these dear resolutions, and protest that you will use them faithfully, as frequent prayer, the sacraments, good works, amendment of the faults discovered by your examination, avoiding occasions of evil, and following the counsels which shall be given you to this end.

5. This done, as if by way of recovering breath and courage, protest a thousand times that you will continue in your resolutions, and as if you had your heart, your soul, and your will in your hands, dedicate them, consecrate them, sacrifice them to God, protesting that you will never take them back, but leave them in the hand of His Divine Majesty to follow in all things His holy ordinance.

6. Pray to God to renew you entirely, and to bless and confirm the renewing of your protestations ; invoke the Blessed Virgin, your guardian Angel, *St. Louis*, and other Saints.

7. In this emotion of heart, go to the feet of your confessor, accuse yourself of the principal faults you shall observe to have been committed since your last general confession, and receive absolution in the same manner you did the first time, and pronounce your Protestation before him, and sign it, and in the end go to unite your renewed heart to its Lord and Saviour in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

CH. XVI.—CONSIDERATIONS AFTER THIS EXERCISE.

1. The day you shall have made this renovation, and the other following, you ought very often to repeat by heart and by mouth those ardent speeches of *St. Paul*, *St. Augustine*, *St. Catherine of Genoa*, and others: *No, I am no more mine; whether I live or die, I am my Saviour's! I have nothing that is myself or mine; my myself is Jesus, and my mine is to be wholly His! O world, thou art always thyself, and I have been always myself, but from henceforth I will be no more myself!* No, we will be no more ourselves; for we will have a changed heart, and the world that has so often deceived us, shall be deceived in us; for not observing our change but by little and little, it will think us always to be *Esau*, and we will prove to be *Jacob*.

2. All these exercises must rest in our hearts, and when we have finished our meditations, we must go fairly and softly to our affairs and conversations, for fear lest the liquor of our resolutions be suddenly spilt; for it must sink and disperse itself into all the parts of our soul, yet without effort either of mind or body.

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS WORK.

All that is solid in Christian perfection, all that is necessary to undertake it courageously and to practise it with love, discretion, tranquillity of mind, and patience, can be found in this collection.

Here you are taught how you may cheer your soul with the firm hope of happily spending your whole life in the disposition and the state of a true Christian, the sum and substance of which consists in perfect charity—charity, whose beginnings constitute the purgative way, whose progress is the illuminative way, whose consummation is the unitive way.

Speaking of the Divine law, *Moses* says, *This commandment, that I command thee this day is not above thee, nor far off from thee: nor is it in heaven that thou shouldst say: Which of us can go up to heaven to bring it unto us, and we may hear and fulfil it in work? Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayest excuse thyself, and say: Which of us can cross the sea, and bring it unto us, that we may hear, and do that which is commanded? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it* (Deut. xxx. 11). And of this Epitome of Holy Readings I would say the very same. In these fifty-three Lessons it sets forth the whole of Christian perfection, explained by two most admirable interpreters of the life of Christ, with teachings so solid, that they guard you from the danger of going astray, and getting lost in the mazes of perplexing speculations, from the danger of becoming entangled in new methods, subtleties, and

readings out of the reach of common sense, from the danger of being exposed to disquiet, and deceptive novel opinions, and directions that are different and sometimes even contradictory. In this Epitome you have, I say, all that you require in order to know God, to serve Him with a tranquil mind, to love Him as perfectly as is possible in this present life, and to overcome with profit all the difficulties and obstacles you may meet on your way. Since this present life consists of warfare and labour, and since only love can lighten its weariness, our chief aim should be to learn how to love amid toil and strife. And it is this which in an easy, solid, yet sublime method is taught to you in this book by your two holy teachers and the Holy of Holies. Follow freely the rules given you in the First Lesson. By continual and repeated reading, joined above all to practice, fix firmly in your spirit these solid maxims, and throughout your whole life recur to them. *More than these, my son, require not* (Eccles. xii. 12). And these words of the Wise Man I take for a conclusion; and I again assert that, if, according to the advice given at starting, you check curiosity in the matter of variety of spiritual reading, you will daily perceive more and more clearly, and with the greatest consolation, that it is useless to seek in many what can be found in one.

But if this our work has in any way helped you to acquire devotion suitable to your state of life, and to adore God in spirit and in truth (for such only are reckoned and admitted among the true adorers), our object is attained. Pray you to God Most High, that while intent on the salvation of others, we may not be heedless of our own.

PRINTED AT
ST. WILLIAM'S PRESS,
MARKET WEIGHTON,
YORKS.

FX LIFE'S
ST. BASIL'S SCHOLASTICATE

115. _____

EX LIBRIS
ST. BASIL'S SCHOLASTIC

No. _____

LE MASSON, Innocent.
Spiritual reading.

BQ
7074
.E53
v.2

ImTheStory.com

Personalized Classic Books in many genre's

Unique gift for kids, partners, friends, colleagues

Customize:

- Character Names
- Upload your own front/back cover images (optional)
- Inscribe a personal message/dedication on the inside page (optional)

Customize many titles Including

- Alice in Wonderland
- Romeo and Juliet
- The Wizard of Oz
- A Christmas Carol
- Dracula
- Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde
- And more...

**Emily's Adventures
in Wonderland**



Ryan & Julia



CPSIA information can be obtained
at www.ICGtesting.com
Printed in the USA
BVOW09s1810231017
498412BV00006B/457/P





Classics Series

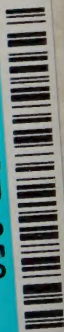
In this collection we are offering thousands of classic and hard to find books. This series spans a vast array of subjects – so you are bound to find something of interest to enjoy reading and learning about.

Subjects:

Architecture
Art
Biography & Autobiography
Body, Mind & Spirit
Children & Young Adult
Drams
Education
Fiction
History
Language Arts & Disciplines
Law
Literary Collections
Music
Poetry
Psychology
Science
...and many more.



T2-BSB-350



ISBN 9781314426625



9 781314 426625

90000

